

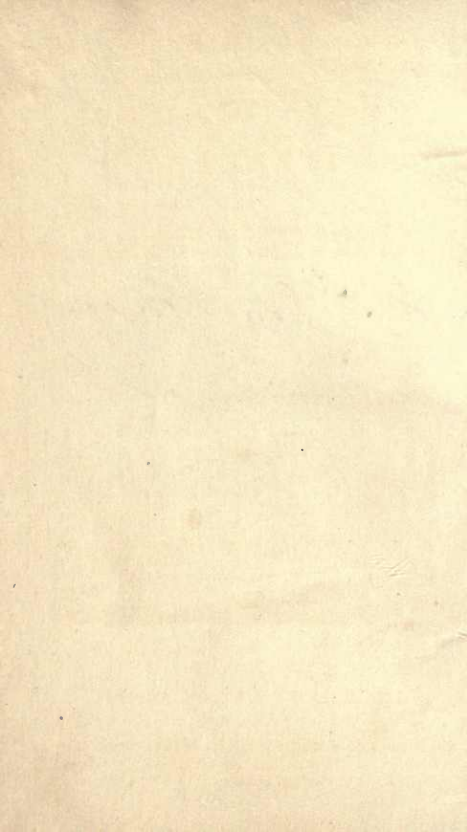
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CHILDREN'S BOOK
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Mrs. J. M. M. M.



STORIES

FROM

SWITZERLAND.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE AUTHOR "OF THE TWO OLD
MEN," &c.



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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

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STORIES

SWITZERLAND





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STORIES FROM SWITZERLAND

FOR

JUVENILE READERS.



THE PLEASURE OF BEING ABLE TO READ.

Boys and girls who have learned to read, are able to examine the Holy Bible, which is the book that tells us about God, and from which we learn about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

They can also read this blessed book to aged persons who were not taught when they were young, and to blind people, or those who are sick.

I am about to relate a little story upon this subject.

Mr. Williams was one day walking in the fields ; as he passed through a meadow in which some sheep were feeding, he saw a little boy about eight years old sitting under a tree. He was quite idle, and gaped and stretched his arms about as if he felt very uncomfortable.



Mr. Williams stopped and said, “ My boy, are you well ?”

“ O, Yes,” answered the boy, “ I am very well ; but I am quite tired, and I do not know what to do.”

Mr. W. Have not you to look after these sheep ?

Boy. Yes, and I have been here ever since six o'clock this morning.

Mr. W. How have you employed yourself during that time ?

Boy. Why, what could I do ? I had nothing to do, and I feel quite tired.

Mr. W. Why did not you bring your Testament with you, and read a few chapters, or learn some verses by heart while looking after your sheep ? you would not have felt so tired, and would have gained some useful knowledge.

The boy did not reply, but held down his head and looked quite ashamed.

Mr. W. I suppose you forgot to bring your Testament ; I am going further, and will lend you mine till I return ; here it is.

The boy looked still more ashamed, but did not say a word.

Mr. W. Why do not you take it? I am afraid you do not know how to read; is that the case?

Boy. Nobody ever taught me, Sir; and I cannot teach myself.

Mr. W. Poor boy; then you never read the holy word of God. I am very sorry for you: it is the best of books, and by attending to what it tells us, even a child may learn how to become wise and happy.

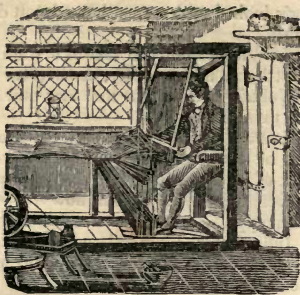
Boy. Indeed, Sir, I wish I could read, for I am quite tired of having nothing to do while I mind the sheep.

Mr. W. I do not wonder at this; you would not only pass your time more pleasantly if you read the Bible, but you would also learn about our Lord Jesus Christ, and how he died for sinners; the Bible teaches us to love him, and to seek to do his will.

Mr. Williams then advised the boy to ask his master's leave that he might go to the Sunday School; and said, that when the long winter evenings came, he might get one of his companions to help him, and he would very soon learn to read.

This kind gentleman then walked on till he came to a cottage where a weaver lived, to whom he wished to speak respecting some work.

Mr. Williams found the weaver very busy at his loom, and while they were conversing he heard the voice of some young person who was reading in the next room. It was the Parable of the Sower, which I dare say you recollect is in the 4th chapter of St. Mark's gospel. It was read in a very distinct and proper manner, as if the reader understood it.



When Mr. Williams had given his orders, he asked who was reading in the next room.

The Weaver. It is my neighbour's daughter ; she is a very good girl, and comes every day to read the Bible to my aged mother, who has been blind for the last three months, so that she cannot read for herself ; and I like to hear her as I sit in my loom.

Mr. W. How old is she ?

The Weaver. She is not much above eight years old ; but she is more steady than many of ten or eleven.

Mr. Williams then went to the room door, and saw the little girl standing by the old woman's chair, reading a large Bible which lay on the window seat.

She read very distinctly, as I mentioned just now ; she minded her stops, and took pains to pronounce every word properly, so that it was very easy to understand what she read. She did not gabble it over like some little folks I am acquainted with, as if she were trying to get the words out of her mouth as fast as possible.



The weaver's aged mother listened very attentively, and appeared very thankful to hear the blessed word of God ; when the little girl had finished the parable, she stopped, and the old woman explained what was meant by the good seed. She said that it was the word of God which taught us about the Saviour, and that when this good seed was sown in our hearts by him, and we were enabled to understand it by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, then we loved him for all he had done and suffered for us ; and, being cleansed from our sins by his precious blood, we desired to do his will.

The little girl listened very attentively, and after asking some questions, began to read again.

Mr. Williams then went into the room, and asked the old woman how she was ; he then turned to the little girl, and said, " My dear, I dare say you are very happy to be able to read ; as you can read not only for yourself, but also you are able to make this good old woman very happy too."

The little girl replied, " Yes, Sir, I am very glad to read to our kind neighbour ; do you know, Sir, that she taught me to read three years ago."

Mr. W. Did you find it very difficult ?

Little Girl. It was rather hard, Sir ; but she taught me a little every day. She was very particular that I never missed coming to her, and I soon found that it became easier.

The old woman then said, “ I trust that God has blessed this little girl ; she was very attentive and soon learned to read the Testament, and I hope He will be pleased, by his Holy Spirit, to enable her to understand the truths it contains, for she becomes more and more attentive every day.

Mr. W. Then I am sure that she is happier every day : because nothing can make us happy, but loving the Saviour and doing his will.

Mr. Williams then gave his Testament to the little girl, who had long wished to have one of her own. He advised her to read a chapter every day, and to pray to God for a blessing, and then bade them all good bye.

As he returned home he could not help thinking what a great difference there was between the shepherd boy who was tired of doing nothing, because he did not know how to read ; and the little girl who was so happy at being able to read the Testament to her kind neighbour.





ARE YOU HAPPY WHEN YOU ARE CROSS?

LUCY was just six years old. One day she was sitting on a little stool, by the side of her mother's chair, and reading the last chapter of St. John's gospel. "Mamma," said Lucy, "what did Christ mean when he told St. Peter to feed his lambs?"

Mamma. My dear, do you not recollect reading some time ago, that Christ said he was the good shepherd, and that his people were the sheep?

Lucy. Oh yes, mamma, I recollect reading that; but I forget where it is.

M. It is in the 10th chapter of St. John.

L. Stop, mamma, please let me find it; O, here it is, the 14th verse, "I am the good shepherd." I suppose Jesus said so?

M. Yes; have not you sometimes seen a shepherd taking care of his flock?

L. O yes, mamma; we saw a shepherd that day you and papa took me a walk by the side of the wood.

M. Do you recollect how pleased you were to see the little lambs skipping about?

L. Yes ; you told me to repeat the verse,

“ Abroad in the meadows to see the young lambs,
 “ Run sporting about by the side of their dams,
 “ With fleeces so clean and so white.”

But, mamma, some of the little lambs have black faces ; and, mamma, don't you recollect, as we returned home, we met the shepherd, and he had got a little lamb in his arms, which had fallen into a pit and hurt itself. How kind the shepherd was in taking care of this little lamb !

M. The prophet Isaiah spoke of the Saviour many hundred years before he came from heaven, and compared him to a shepherd. In the 40th chapter, the prophet says, “ He shall feed his



flock like a shepherd : he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.”

L. But, mamma, I do not quite understand this ; Christ is not now upon earth, and when he was here he did not keep sheep.

M. No, my dear ; but it is to make us understand that our Lord takes care of his people, as the shepherd takes care of his sheep ; and he does not forget children, as you saw the shepherd did not forget his lambs.

L. But who are *his* lambs ?

M. You, my dear Lucy, are one ; if you love him, and believe in him as your Saviour, and seek to do his will in all things, and are willing to follow his word.

L. O, mamma, I should like to be one ; how quiet and happy the lamb seemed to be when the shepherd was carrying it.

M. Well, then, my dear love, pray to the Saviour ; he said, "Suffer little children to come to me and forbid them not ;" pray to him, that he may give you a new heart, which will be happy in loving him and obeying his word, through the power of the Holy Spirit, which he has promised to give to all that ask it ; and earnestly try to be a good girl, and to subdue all naughty and unkind tempers.

Lucy again thanked her mamma ; and as she had finished her lesson, she went and put her book away in its place. I hope my readers will remember this, for it is very untidy to leave books littering about upon chairs or the floor. She then took her work, and went and sat down by the window, and began to sew very busily.

Just as she had begun, her little brother Samuel came into the room ; he went up to her, and said, "Lucy, dear, if you please, will you cut out this paper stag for me ? I have drawn its legs very nicely, as you see, but I am afraid I shall not be able to cut them out properly, they are so very slender, and I want to put it on papa's table before he comes home, to surprise him."

I am sorry to say, that instead of doing this directly, and in a kind manner, Lucy frowned, and said, in a short sharp tone, "How troublesome you are, you are always teasing me ; I have just sat down to work and I am too busy, go and do it yourself."

Little Samuel was a good boy, and instead of returning a sharp answer to her cross speech, he said, "Lucy, please to cut it out, you will do it so much better than I can, and it will not take you a minute." Lucy put down her work, and took up her scissors; but when people set about a thing in an ill humour they never do it properly, and this was the case with Lucy. Her brother had taken a great deal of pains to draw the stag very nicely, but she cut it out very carelessly, and presently poor Samuel saw that one of its legs was cut quite off.

"There," said he: "there, my poor stag; it is quite spoiled, you have cut its leg off."

"Finish it yourself," said Lucy, throwing the stag one way and the scissors another. "It's all your fault, you ought to have let me go on quietly with my work, and not come to interrupt me, as you always do."

Poor Samuel looked quite surprised; he was sorry to see his nice stag spoiled, but he was still more sorry to see Lucy so out of humour, and he could not think that it was his fault. Indeed, I have generally found that when people are very ready to blame others, the fault has commonly been their own, after all.

"Lucy," said her mother, "is this like one of the little lambs we were talking about? Remember, my child, God sees you, and do you think he is pleased that you should speak in such a manner to your brother? Is that following the example of Christ?"

Lucy felt that she was wrong, and burst into tears. Her mother took her upon her knee, and said, "Lucy, now you feel that it is necessary to pray to the Saviour, to give you a new heart, and to enable you to subdue all naughty and unkind

tempers, and that you should try to do so. Do you feel happy because you were so cross and out of humour?"

Lucy was now convinced that she had done wrong; and that if she had behaved to Samuel as a sister should act to a brother, she would neither have spoiled his stag nor have done what was a great deal worse. I mean, she would not have given way to a naughty temper, quite contrary to what the Bible tells us: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." "O mama," said she, "I do feel very sorry, and I will pray to the Saviour—"

"That you may be one of his lambs," said her mother. "Do this really from your heart, then you will feel more happy. For God is very kind to us, and we ought to try to be the same to others. Remember, Christ said, 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.'"

Lucy kissed her mother, and went to her little desk. She took out a very pretty drawing of a basket of fruit, and gave it to Samuel, saying, "Here, Sammy, pray take this instead of your stag which I spoiled, and this besides;" she then gave him a kiss, he gave her another, and then ran away quite consoled for his loss.





MAURICE;

Or, the Way of the Slothful is a Hedge of Thorns.

PEOPLE say that idle folks are good-for-nothing folks: but they might say much more upon the subject. Idleness is a sin against God, and *therefore* idlers never can be happy; for how can any persons be happy when they are committing sin?

Maurice knew this very well, at least his parents had often told him so; but Maurice still continued his sinful habits of idleness, carelessness, and self-indulgence; he very often neglected his duties, and I need not add, that he was very often unhappy. My dear children, you might as easily count the sparks which fly up the chimney, as reckon up the sins and troubles which come from idleness.

Maurice had passed several unhappy idle weeks.

He did not like to write a copy ; he said his lessons were all so hard that he could not learn them ; he laid in bed of a morning till obliged to get up ; and when his brothers and sisters asked him to do any thing for them, he spoke cross and pushed them away. He was dull, peevish, and discontented ; just as idle boys and girls always are.



There he is in the picture ; he sat for two hours together playing with his keys, rather than learn his lesson, though he wished for a game of play, and knew that he could not be allowed to play till he had repeated it.

People generally go on from bad to worse, and the last week was the worst of all. It began badly. On Sunday morning Maurice gave way to a naughty temper, and spoke to his mother in a very improper manner.

Instead of praying to God to send away this evil temper, he thought about something else while he repeated his prayer, and ate his breakfast without asking a blessing, just as a little dog would have done.

After breakfast he teased his sisters, and did all

he could to hinder them from learning the chapter they were to repeat to their father in the afternoon. He went to church it is true, but he did not attend to any thing that he heard; part of the time he looked about him, and the remainder he sat yawning, and he asked three times when the sermon would be over.

I have told my little readers enough about his naughty behaviour; the rest of the day passed much in the same manner, and the rest of the week like the Sunday. I have always found that unless there is "Happy Sunday," there will not be "a Happy Week." Thus there was nothing but idleness, quarrelling, disobedience, ill-temper, and ill-manners; and poor Maurice during this week fully shewed the sinfulness of his heart. His behaviour clearly proved the truth of the text, "His servants ye are whom ye obey;" (Romans vi. 16.) and my readers will recollect that when this text was written the servants were *slaves*. He had obeyed Satan by his wicked conduct on the Sabbath, and he continued to serve that *hard master* all the week, with a constant attention to *his* will that was very dreadful. How much better it would have been to have served the Saviour, "whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light." His father was very kind, and warned him several times of the consequences of such conduct. On the following Sunday he spoke again to Maurice for a considerable time, telling him how displeasing such conduct was to the Lord.

"For God looks down from heav'n on high,

"Our actions to behold;

"And he is pleas'd when children try

"To do as they are told."

and,

" His own most holy book declares,
 " He loves good children still ;
 " And that he answers all their pray'rs,
 " Just as a tender father will."

His kind father also reminded Maurice of the example of our Saviour, who employed himself in doing his Father's will : and he asked Maurice whether he was happy when he did not try to please God, but did the very things from which Christ is ready to deliver his children, when they really pray to him for the forgiveness of their sins.

I am sorry to say Maurice did not attend to this kind advice, and his father determined to let him experience more of the unhappiness which follows from such conduct, so he let him go on his own way till Saturday.

He then took Maurice a walk, and they came to a pleasant meadow, which was separated from the road by a very high and strong thorn hedge. Perceiving that Maurice was walking with his eyes fixed on the ground, and making faces, his father suddenly turned into the meadow, by the gate which they were just passing, and walked along a path on the other side of the hedge.

Maurice had gone some distance before he found that he was alone, he then looked about for his father, and at length saw him in the field.

" Father, father," cried he, " why have you left me ? Wait for me, pray wait for me."

Father. Come to me ; this path is very pleasant, and the meadow is full of beautiful flowers.

Maurice. But the hedge is so thick, I cannot get to you. Oh ! it has pricked my hands so badly. Papa, how did you get there ?

F. Try again ; see if you cannot push the

branches aside, and put your foot firm upon the bank.

Maurice tried again, but he only pricked his hands, and scratched his legs; at last he began to cry.

F Go a little further and try again.

Maurice went backwards and forwards, and tried here and there, but all in vain; the gate was round a corner and he could not see it.

M. Dear papa, I cannot get to you; pray come and fetch me.

F. Why cannot you come of yourself?

M. Oh, papa, look at these thorns, the hedge is full of them, and it is so thick I cannot put my hand through. How can I pass it, I shall be torn to pieces; do look at my hands, see they are all bloody.

His father then ran back, and came out of the field through the gate, and called Maurice. He sat down, and taking out his little Bible told him to turn to Prov. xv. 19.

Maurice read "The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns."

F. Tell me, my boy, do you understand what this text means? You have pricked your fingers and scratched your hands; but tell me the truth, are not these troubles as nothing when compared with the discontent, and self-reproaches, and shame, in which you have passed all this week? Is not the word of God true? And we cannot be happy while doing those things which are contrary to his word. My dear Maurice, listen to me, and remember what I say. The Lord tells us in his word, as you see, that the way of the slothful, that is to say his conduct or his life, is like a thorn hedge. The word of God is always true.

You have been unhappy lately because you have done what God declares is contrary to his will. You will be just as uncomfortable to-morrow, the next day, and as long as you continue this conduct. There always will be a *thorn hedge* before you, whenever you give way to carelessness, idleness, or other naughty ways; and though you see others good and happy, and wish to be like them, you will think that you cannot do as they do. Your idleness will bring its own punishment, for the slothful man punishes himself by his idleness, and God is angry with him.

Maurice felt this, for the Lord was pleased to touch his heart, and cause him to feel the truth of what his father said. He put his hands round his father's neck, and exclaimed, "I am very sorry I have been so naughty and so foolish; I am very sorry indeed that I have sinned against God, and I hope not to do so again."

F. My dear Maurice, you have promised this more than once already, but the *thorn hedge* has always been in your way, and you could not pass it. You know what I mean. Now can you tell me why you could not leave off being naughty?

M. Yes, papa; I know why it was. I did not ask the Saviour to give me a new heart; but I will do so now, indeed I will; I will not leave off praying to him to cure me of my evil ways till he has taught me to do His will.

Maurice's father then kissed him, and said, 'Whatever you ask from our heavenly Father, in the name of his son our Lord Jesus Christ, He has promised that he will bestow; then, my dear child, seek for his grace at once, pray for it to day, pray for it *now*.

Perhaps some other time, I may tell you if

Maurice did pray to God to deliver him from his idleness, and whether this hedge of thorns was taken out of his way. Meanwhile my readers may hope that it was removed; and let them see whether there is not a hedge of thorns in *their own* way. If there is, I hope they will not rest till they have found out how to pass it.



THE REAL FRIEND.

MAMMA, said Henry, may I go and play with William, this afternoon?

Mamma. Why do you wish to go to play with William rather than with Thomas, who lives so much nearer?

Henry. I like very well to play with Thomas; but if you please I had rather go to see William.

M. I wonder at that, for Thomas has a great many more playthings than William; I know he has a very nice paint box, and you are very fond of painting pictures.

H. Yes; poor William has hardly any

playthings, except a few old ones that I have given him.

M. Then how do you amuse yourselves?

H. Oh! he is so very clever, he is always making me laugh and trying to please me; and then he can keep a secret; he never tells any body what I say.

M. Pray what good is there in that? Do you say things that are wrong, and such as you would be ashamed of, if other persons knew them?

H. No, I don't mean that; but it is so nice to have a secret.

M. Then, I suppose, if you say any thing that is silly or foolish, William never tells you it is wrong?

H. Oh, he can say foolish things as well as I; and then he tells me so many funny stories; there's Puss in Boots, and I don't know how many more, and there's his story about Old Uncle Natty.

M. What! do you mean his Uncle Nathaniel?

H. Yes, mamma; William one day asked him for three-pence to buy a pound of cherries, but he would only give him a penny, and William always calls him—

M. Stop, Henry; I am afraid William is a naughty boy, and I do not wish to hear such a story as that.

H. But, mamma, may we not laugh sometimes?

M. Certainly but not at such silly or wicked things:—in what other manner do you and William amuse yourselves?

H. In a great many ways; sometimes we draw, or we play in the garden.

M. Pray which of you draws the best?

H. William draws houses better than I do, but I can draw horses and trees the best, and I

often draw landscapes and men on horseback for him.

M. And which of you can run fastest ?

H. I can.

M. Is not William sometimes out of humour because you do these things better than he can ?

H. O no ; the other day he told me I drew so prettily, that he had rather see me draw for a quarter of an hour than draw for a whole day by himself.

M. What becomes of these pretty drawings ?

H. He pins them against the wall in his bedroom.

M. Why do you not ask William to come home, sometimes ? As you are such great friends I should think he would be glad to come to see you.

H. Why, mamma, William says he does not feel so comfortable here ; he is always afraid of you.

M. How so ?

H. Why, mamma, you are so wise, that he is afraid to say just whatever comes into his head.

M. But Thomas always seems very happy when he is here.

H. Oh, he is so wise, we call him the Judge : we have always called him so since the day we went to see farmer Martin.

M. But why do you call him so ?

H. You know, mamma, that we must cross the long meadow to go to farmer Martin's. To save the trouble of going all the way round to the gate, William said we had better scramble through the hedge and make a short cut across the grass. Thomas looked as grave as a judge, and told us that the hedge was made on purpose that people should not scramble through it, and that it was not right to trample down the grass. William

said, that we should not do much harm, and that many others had often done so before us. Thomas asked him if we were to do wrong because others did the same? William directly jumped over the hedge and ran across the meadow crying out, "Who cares for cowards; not I, for one."

M. Did you follow William?

H. No; Thomas would not let me; he made me go round by the gate, and along the path with him.

M. And what did William say, when you arrived at the farm?

H. Why, he had tumbled into a ditch which the long grass had prevented him from seeing; the cow-boy pulled him out and was washing him at the pump.



M. Did Thomas tell William he had done wrong?

H. Not at first; but when the cow-boy was gone, he said, "William you had better have gone along the path as we did."

M. Is this the reason why you call him the Judge?

H. Yes, mamma, but you ought to have heard with what a grave tone he spoke—just like a judge on the bench.

M. Ought not serious things to be said in a grave manner?

H. Yes; but he makes such grave speeches.

M. Do you recollect one of these grave speeches?

H. Oh, yes, I can easily do that. The other day I was going to tell him something his sister had said; it was nothing very particular, but somehow I hoped it would have made him angry with her. All at once Thomas stopped me, and said, “A whisperer separateth chief friends;” and if you had but seen how grave he looked.

M. Open the Bible and you will find this grave speech as you call it, in the 17th chapter of Proverbs. My dear Henry, it was not Thomas but the word of God that stopped you.

H. Indeed, mamma, I did not know it was in the Bible. But Thomas is always so grave; he looks as if he meant to tell you every thing I say or do. As we came home from farmer Martin’s I got up behind a carriage, and the coachman did not find me out for a long while; but when Thomas overtook me, he said such a deal about its being wrong to get up behind a carriage without leave.

M. What did he say?

H. Oh, I hardly recollect all: he said it was unjust, for I did it without asking leave. I am sure you will say that it is nonsense to call such a trifle as that unjust.

M. I am quite of Thomas’s opinion; what would you have thought, if a person had put two or three sacks of corn behind the carriage?

H. That would have tired the horses and

made them go slower, and the people would not have arrived so soon at their journey's end.

M. Then to do so would have been unjust, would it not?

H. I understand what you mean, mamma; though I am not so heavy as a sack of corn, yet I see I was wrong.

M. Well, then, you also see that Thomas was right; but what said William?

H. He whispered to me, "Never mind him; you had a nice ride."

M. Was that right?

H. No, I see it was wrong.

M. Well, my dear boy, as you understand what I mean, I will tell you something more. Do not forget what I am going to say, for it is in the Bible. "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet," (Prov. xxix. 5.); and "Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." (Prov. xix. 6.) Now, tell me the truth: should you be so fond of William if he contradicted you, or would not do just as you wished him?

H. Perhaps not. Yesterday I was angry with him because he would not take a walk with me.

M. Has he ever told you that you are too fond of play, that you like to be idle, that you are greedy for every thing nice, and that you sometimes fly into a passion? I rather think that he never told you so.

H. But, mamma, am I so naughty?

M. What do you think? Remember, *God* sees and hears you.

H. Why, I am not always quite so good as I should be; but one cannot help being naughty sometimes.

M. And is it right to be naughty?

H. Oh, no, quite wrong; it is much better to be good.

M. Then are those right or wrong who see your naughty tricks, I mean your faults; or, as they really are, *your sins*; and do not tell you of them?

H. Certainly it is right to tell me of them; but then, mamma, it is so unpleasant to have Thomas always finding fault with me. He never is with me for a quarter of an hour without blaming me for something.

M. Do you recollect the day we went to Sir Edward Walton's? When the carriage came to fetch us, and it was time to get ready, you ran and asked me for your best clothes.

H. Yes; for I should have been quite ashamed if I had gone to play with Sir Edward's children in my old jacket and trowsers.

M. Suppose, just as you were getting into the carriage, Thomas had pulled you back, and told you there was a great spot of dirt upon your frill, should you have been angry with him?

H. Certainly not; I should have thanked him, and should have gone directly and put on a clean shirt.

M. Then your wish to be neat would have made you willing to listen to his advice! Ah, my Henry, tell me, is not there one who is much greater than Sir Edward, and before whom we must one day appear?

H. You mean, mamma, that we must appear before God.

M. Yes, that is what I mean, and I speak seriously. But are not we *always* in his presence? Whenever we pray to him, whether at home, or in the House of God, we present ourselves before him. And above all, when our life in this world

is ended, shall we not have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ ?

H. Yes, mamma, the Bible tells us so.

M. And do you think that he who is so holy will be pleased to see things which are so wrong in your conduct ; for instance, anger, idleness, disobedience, greediness, or other wicked ways ?

H. No ; for the bible tells us that God “ is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.”

M. Well then if a person warns you of these faults is he your friend or your enemy ?

H. Oh, I understand you now, mamma ; he is really my best friend.

M. But what is he who will hide these faults and prevent you from seeing them, or even persuade you that they are beauties : what ought you to think of him ?

H. Why, he would be unkind, just as if he had let me go to Sir Edward’s with a dirty frill or a hole in my coat.

M. Henry are you aware that every sin is rebellion against God, against our Lord and Saviour ; and therefore is very wrong ?

H. Yes, I recollect it now ; but I did not think of it before as I ought to have done.

M. Well, then, be thankful to those who tell you of these things, and love you so as to tell you of them, when they see that you have forgotten them.

H. Then, mamma, do you think that William does not love me, because he does not tell me when I do wrong ?

M. My dear boy, I fear that William flatters you, and that he will do you much harm ; and I think that Thomas is a **REAL FRIEND**, because he fears God, and faithfully warns you when you are wrong.

H. But ought I to like Thomas better than William?

M. The Bible tells us, "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue," (Prov. xxviii. 23); and I am sure, if you wish to obey God you will believe his word.

H. Yes, mamma, I do wish to obey God, because I know that is the only way to be happy.

M. Well; now, Henry, I will let you choose; you may go where you like best.

H. Then, mamma, I will go to Thomas, and ask him to come and see me.

M. I also wish you to see William and tell him how wrong he has been, and how unkind he is to you. Do this openly and with truth, and shew him that you do not wish him to be a *flatterer* but a **REAL FRIEND**.





IDLE DICK.

RICHARD WATSON was twelve years old ; his father kept the village public-house.

I am sorry to say that Richard's father was not a good man ; he drank and swore, and his house was the resort of all the wicked fellows in the neighbourhood.

There was no Bible in the house ; he never prayed to God nor attended public worship, but spent Sunday just like any other day. He bought and sold, and drank, and swore, and quarrelled on that day, just as if there was no Fourth Commandment and as if God had never said, "nor drunkards nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 10.)

I need not say that such a wicked man did not bring up his family in the fear of the Lord. He



was a widower, and Richard was his only child. It was even said that his mother's death had been hastened by sorrow for her husband's evil conduct.

While she lived, Richard was sent to school and had learned to read; but after her death



his father kept him at home, and said he would teach Richard himself, but he never took any trouble about it.

Richard grew up without learning any thing more, except to write just enough to keep an account of what the customers called for. His time was employed in waiting upon them, or in washing the pots and glasses, and setting up ninepins

for those who played. Poor boy! you may suppose he heard nothing good. At last, by listening to oaths and wicked words, he took pleasure in hearing them, and soon began to make use of them himself.

What was the end of all this! Why before he was twelve years old, Richard Watson was looked upon as the most good-for-nothing mischievous fellow in the neighbourhood.



He was idle, fond of play, and what was worse, a gambler, a thief, and a complete scoundrel.

You might hear him speak saucily to his father, and even laugh at him and disobey his orders.

He had frequently been punished, but at length he despised both blows and reproofs, and used to run away from home whenever he expected to be punished.

He was the disgrace of the village, and was known by the name of "Idle Dick."

Mr. Watson began to think that if his son went on in this manner he would come to the gallows at last, and determined that he would try and reform him.

How did he begin? at first he said, "Dick, if you do not mind your work you shall have nothing to eat." Dick laughed at this, and went to the pantry and helped himself.

His father discovered it, so he shut Dick in the cellar for two days and gave him nothing but bread and water.

This punishment had some effect Dick behaved better for one week, but the Thursday following he went to a fight in the neighbourhood, and staid there all day among gamblers and pick-pockets.

His father saw Dick on his way home, and gave him such a beating that he laid down on the path-way unable to stir. Old Joseph, an honest basket-maker, and another man who lived in the village, came by and together they carried him



home, where he was for some days confined to his bed; and he was so much hurt by the severe beating, that for a whole week he could not walk further than to the bench at the door.

Poor Dick, as you will recollect, had lost his mother! Ah! it is a sad loss for children when God takes away their mothers. Nobody in the house cared about Dick, nobody tried to persuade his father to treat him kindly, or advised Dick

to behave better. If any body noticed him it was only to laugh and say, "Ah! you idle fellow, you have got what you deserve."

A few doors off lived a poor woman named Maud, Her husband was a pedlar, and was absent from the village a great part of the year; but she staid at home and earned her living by making lace.



This good woman had a daughter named Jenny, about the same age as Richard, but she had been brought up in a very different manner; for as soon as Jenny could understand what was said to her, her parents had taught her to love and serve God, as the Bible directs us. She learned to pray regularly, and attended divine service every Sunday.

Whenever Jenny was naughty, her mother used to remind her that God saw her, and that she had disobeyed his word, which tells us, that children are to honor their parents, to be gentle and industrious, and always to speak the truth.

Sometimes it was necessary to punish Jenny, but her parents did not chastise her in wrath, but with kindness, as we read in the book of

Proverbs ; “ Withhold not correction from the child for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.” (Prov. xxiii. 13, 14.)

This kind correction had been blessed by Him who directed it in His word ; and as Jenny grew up she was the most dutiful, the most industrious, and the most pious of the young people in the village.

She never was seen flaunting about with those idle giddy girls who are so fond of laughing and giggling at every thing they see, and forget that a modest quiet spirit is, in the sight of God, an ornament of great price. 1 Pet. iii. 4.

Jenny lived quietly at home, and tried to be as serviceable as possible to her mother ; and very useful she was, as all little boys and girls may be who try to make themselves so.

It was Jenny who swept out the cottage every morning and dusted the furniture ; it was Jenny who fetched water and went to the shop for every



thing that was wanted, and her mother often trusted her to carry work home to her employers.

Every thing she did, Jenny tried to do well, and it was always done quickly and properly.

Now can my little readers tell me, how so young a person could be so useful and behave so well? It was by the blessing of God; for, like Joseph of old, God was with her, and that which she did, the Lord made it to prosper.

You will suppose that her time passed very differently from that of *Idle Dick*, who was, as we read in Isaiah lvii. 20, 21. "Like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," for "there is no peace saith my God to the wicked."

My readers will observe, from this history, how great a difference there is between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who serve him not. Compare Jane and Richard, and say which of these two was the happiest? The boy who knew nothing about Jesus, or the girl who had taken the yoke of Christ upon her?

But to return to my story. Maud was at home the first day that Dick was able to come out after the beating of which I told you. Poor fellow! he was sitting at the door in the sun, and looked very pale and ill. Maud saw him, and asked him how he did.

Dick did not answer, though she spoke very kindly; he only made a face at her, and looked another way.

Maud did not mind this, and at last got him to say that he was unwell, owing to the beating which his father gave him.

This kind neighbour then tried to make him understand that it was very wrong to go from home without leave, and that a child committed a great sin when he rebelled against his father.

“My father hates me,” said Dick in a revengeful tone, “he always has hated me, and he would be glad to see me dead; but—but I’ll run away from him some day or other.”

Maud tried to calm him, and to convince him that he was wrong in thinking that his father hated him, but her kindness seemed to be of no use; Dick got up and went into the house without even saying, “I thank you.”

In a few days Dick got well again, and I am sorry to say the first thing he did was to go with some other good-for-nothing fellows to rob an orchard, when one of whom fell and brake his arm.



This was done one Friday night, Dick got out at his bed-room window, which was over the roof of the stable. They were the greater part of the night about this wicked robbery, and when it was done Dick returned to his room in the same way, after hiding his share of the plunder among some faggots in the yard.

It so happened that his father wanted to move this wood to make room for something else, and he and the ostler set about it the next morning. They soon found the bag full of apples and pears which Dick had put there.

“What is this?” exclaimed the father with an

oath, "this is another trick of that good-for-nothing fellow master Dick; I'll give it him properly for this."

Dick was still in bed; hearing this he jumped up and ran to the window, where he saw that his father had snatched up a horsewhip and was coming in doors. "O father, father!" cried he, "forgive me this once, pray put down the whip."

Maud was in her garden and heard what was passing. She came to the hedge and said, "My



good neighbour, pray do not treat your son so severely, it will only harden him,"---"My good woman," replied he, "mind your own daughter; I know how to teach dogs good manners, and my good-for-nothing son must be treated like Boxer yonder."

Maud continued to intercede, and at length Mr. Watson consented that Dick should not be flogged, but only shut up in the cellar. "The Publican, saying Well neighbour, I will do so, if it is only to shew you how kind and gentle I am. Go, Peter, and put the good-for-nothing fellow into the cellar: you may give him a crust and a mug of water. But

Dick, mind me, I promise you that the next nonsense you are after I'll give you a thorough flogging."

Perhaps you will say, now Dick will be more careful, or he must be a very foolish fellow. The Bible tells us, that "the sow that was washed is turned again to her wallowing in the mire," (2 Peter ii. 22.) and Dick returned to his wicked ways, as I am going to tell you.

One Saturday afternoon, as he was setting up the ninepins in the skittle ground, he saw some of his companions passing by, and they beckoned him. Dick made a false excuse to join them, and promised to go with them the next day to a wake in a neighbouring village, where there would be rope-dancing, wild beasts, and a puppet-show.



He thought of the horsewhip: but such is the power of sin over the heart that is led captive by Satan at his will, that neither punishment nor suffering can keep back those who are not restrained by the grace of God.

The next morning at day-break Dick and his companions set off to the village.

"But," my readers will say, "how could this be—the next day was Sunday."

What I am telling you about happened in a country where the people did not keep holy the Sabbath-day, not even in an outward manner and where God's holy day is despised, there can be but little of true religion. But although most of the people in that country profaned the Lord's day and did not love the Saviour, still there were some few among them who were his children, and who both loved and served him.

You may suppose that neither Maud, nor her daughter Jenny, nor old Joseph the basket-maker, wished to go to this wake. On the contrary; in the morning when they saw their neighbours preparing to go, they felt more strongly than ever, that the pleasures which a Christian enjoys, are more pure and more lasting, than the foolish empty enjoyments of those who despise God and his holy word.

Dick spent the day in all sorts of tricks; he pilfered gingerbread and cakes from the stalls that he might have something to eat, and I am sorry to say he stole half-a-crown from a little girl who wanted to get it changed, and set some dogs to fight; in a word, he committed all sorts of roguery.



When night came, most of the people had left the fair. One of Dick's companions said to him,

“It is late, let us go home.” “Presently,” answered Dick; “I have been playing at pitch and toss for more than an hour and have lost almost all my money, I must go on a little longer and win some of it back again.”

A quarter of an hour first, and then half an hour passed away. Dick still continued the game, and lost more and more, and swore, and used a great many bad words, till at last his companion was tired of waiting, and returned home by himself.

The clock struck nine, when all at once Dick recollected the horsewhip and his father’s threat; away he ran as fast as he could, but it was near ten before he got to the village. All was quiet, not a light was to be seen, except at the parsonage, and the public-house.



You can hardly suppose how much afraid this unhappy wicked boy felt as he came to his father’s house. He stopped at the door and listened. His father was speaking in a very angry tone, and swore he would break his horsewhip over the back of his good-for-nothing son directly he appeared.

Dick was afraid to enter; he put his hand upon the latch, but dared not lift it up. How sad it is when a child dares not enter his father’s house! —After walking all round the house he got upon

the dunghill, and so climbed on the roof of the stable, from whence he could just reach the window of his room. He got in and sat down, not daring to stir, nor hardly venturing to breathe.

His father continued to threaten louder and louder; Dick trembled from head to foot, and did not know what would become of him, for he knew that his father would find him at last, and that he might depend on having a severe flogging.

“The fear of the wicked shall come upon him,” (Prov. x. 23,); the Bible tells us this. Dick had hardly been ten minutes in his room, when he heard his father open the door at the foot of the stairs, saying, “Perhaps this good-for-nothing fellow has got in at the window, I’ll go and see.”

In a moment Dick was out of the window, over the roof of the stable, down upon the dunghill, and along the garden, and had jumped over the hedge before his father got up stairs.

When he was in Maud’s little field, he saw a light in her lower window;—not knowing what to do, he determined to knock at the window, and ask this good woman to help him.

Maud had family prayer regularly every evening with her daughter and Joseph’s old servant.—The Bible laid upon the table, and just as Dick



came to the window, she was saying something about what she had read; he could not hear what she said, but he was impressed with reverence and did not knock for fear of disturbing them. After they had knelt down and prayed, they bid each other good night and left the room.

Dick was struck with this, but was obliged to consider what he should do next.

The night was very dark, all was quiet—not a light was to be seen.—Dick once more climbed to his window, but the shutter was fastened. He could not get in, and at last was obliged to lie down upon a heap of dry leaves under a shed along with the dog Boxer.

His sleep was not very sound, and the stars were still shining when he awoke. The first thing that he did was to get out of the village as soon as possible, for he was more afraid of meeting his father than the evening before.

It was market-day at the next town, and Dick knew that his father meant to take a pig there to sell; so he waited under the hedge, peeping out like a fox in his hole, watching till his father should pass by.

Just as the sun rose, he heard a waggon coming, and looked through the hedge, hoping it was his



father : he saw the well-known team, and it was going towards the town—but it was driven by Peter the ostler ?

The waggon went by ; Dick remained in his lurking place without knowing what to do. He began to be hungry, but had nothing to eat, not even a crust of dry bread, and was well aware that if he went home the whip would be laid across his back.

While thus full of doubt and fear, he went to the gate which led to the common, and leant over the stile thinking what he should do.

In a few minutes Jenny passed by. This good industrious girl had a rake over her shoulder, and was going to rake up the hay which had fallen from the carts on the Saturday evening as they went across the common.

Jenny was a good deal surprised, and even a little frightened, to see Dick at that place so early in the morning, lest he should play her some trick. However, she mustered up courage, and said--

“ Why, Mr. Richard, who would have thought of seeing you here so early ? ”

Dick. Yes : here I am, but what is that to you ?



Jenny. I meant no harm, Mr. Richard, only I did not expect you would have been here.

D. And pray Jenny, where are you going with your rake? What are you after at this time of the morning?

J. I am going to gather up the hay which has been dropped. You know Farmer Norris carted his hay on Saturday, and my mother has sent me to gather up what has fallen from the carts.

D. What right have you to it?

J. My mother says that the hay which is left by the way-side is like the ears of corn left by the reaper which poor people are allowed to glean.



Dick was silent for a minute; he then said in a milder tone, "So, Jenny, you read the Bible?"

J. Yes, sure enough, I read it every day, but particularly on Sundays.

D. What is that great book about?

J. Why, Mr. Richard, did you never read it? Don't you know how to read?

D. O yes, I can read very well, but I do not spend my time in reading all sorts of books.

J. Mr. Richard, you must not speak of the Bible in that manner. It is the word of God, who made the heavens, and the earth, and all things, and it is truth itself.

D. Why what can all such a great book be about ?

J. It tells the history of the world since the creation. There is an account of the deluge, when all the earth was covered with water, even the tops of the mountains. There is the his-



tory of Abraham and Isaac, and then there is the beautiful history of Joseph, and an account of wicked Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea. Then there is the history of Moses and the ten commandments, which God spake from mount Sinai. And there is the history of King David who wrote the Psalms, and of Solomon his son, who was the wisest man. But then above all there is the history of the Son of God, who came down from heaven and died for sinners, I mean Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour ; and I cannot tell you how many histories besides.

D. Pray what is to be learned from all these histories, as you call them ?

J. They teach us what God is, and all that he has done for us his creatures. But above all, they teach us that we are all sinners by nature and inclined to evil, and that Jesus Christ, the Son of

God, alone can save our souls from being lost and suffering punishment in hell.

D. Then I am in danger of being lost, and do I need any body to save my soul?

J. Why, Mr. Richard what do you think? All are sinners, and surely you are not one of the best among us.

D. What do you mean by a sinner?

J. A sinner is one who does not fear God, who tells lies, who steals, who is disobedient to his parents, who delights to keep company with wicked persons, and who does not keep holy the Sabbath-day.

D. Why, if these are all sinners there is a fine lot of them in our neighbourhood, and perhaps after all you are one of them, Miss Jenny.

J. Yes, it is too true, I am a sinner, but—then—I know from the Bible what God has done for me.

D. Well I should like to know what God has done for you more than for me?

J. I did not say that he had not done the same for you, Mr. Richard; He will do the same for all those who ask him. O believe on Christ.

D. Well, and pray what is this good thing?

J. I trust that He has saved my soul from hell, by the death of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who died upon the cross and shed his precious blood to cleanse my soul from its sins. This is what I trust God has done for me, and I have good reason for believing that he has done this, for the word of God tells me so.

D. Has He done this for me, Jenny?

J. If you read the Bible you will find that Christ died for sinners, even for the chief of sinners, as the hymn says,

“ But what is more than all beside,
 “ The Bible tells us Jesus died :
 “ This is its best, its chief intent,
 “ To lead poor sinners to repent.”

But it is time I went to work, for my mother has to go to market, and must wait till I return.— Good bye, Mr. Richard.

Dick did not reply. He was thinking about what Jenny had told him, and particularly the latter part of it.

“ It is too true,” said he, returning towards the village, “ what good do I get from the way in which I am going on. I am more wretched than a dog. All day I am unhappy and out of hu-



mour. Every body in the village despises me, even the little children. If I am at home I am sure to be scolded or beaten ; if I go out with my companions, we are always lying, and stealing, and swearing and quarrelling. What good is there in going on so ? How different is Jenny : she is about my age, and how happy she always seems ! How pleased she looked last night, while her mother was talking about that Bible which they all seem so fond of. But why should not I read it

as well as they? I'll go to old Joseph—I recollect one day he offered to lend me a Bible; I'll go directly."

Dick then ran on, and going round the outside of the village he came to the old basket-maker's cottage. He was afraid of meeting his father, but at last he safely arrived at Joseph's cottage.



The basket-maker was very busily at work.—“What, Dick, idle Dick, is it you? O my boy, when will you turn from your evil ways?”

“I am come on purpose,” said Dick, in a humble tone, “I am come to ask for the Bible you offered to lend me.”

“What! you asking for a Bible?” said Joseph with surprise. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots.” Jer. xiii. 23.

D. Indeed I came on purpose to ask for it.

J. And how came you to think about it? Did it come into your head last night when you jumped out of the window upon the dunghill, and lurked about in Maud's field?

D. Did you see me?

J. I see you? If I had, I should not have let you go on playing your tricks.

D. Does my father know about it?

J. O yes, he knew all about it last night, and he saw you skulking under the hedge this morning.

Dick was quite astonished; he coloured, and looked like a thief caught in the act.

J. Why I do believe you are ashamed for once. You know what you have done, and out will come the horsewhip.

Dick sat down on a stone, and began to cry, "O how unhappy I am, I wish I was dead!"

J. Why that perhaps might suit you, if it was not for what the Bible tells us. But now, Dick, say which you had rather suffer; a few horsewhippings in this world, or eternal torments in the next? But come, we will see whether something cannot be done to make up what has happened. What have you been about since day-break?

Dick related his conversation with Jenny, and said, "My good Mr. Joseph, I do assure you I am now in earnest, and am determined to behave better."

J. My boy, I suppose hunger makes you say so? Pray did you have any supper last night, or any breakfast this morning?

D. I am hungry enough to be sure, but it is neither hunger nor the horsewhip which makes me wish to behave better. I am determined not to go on in this way any longer; I am more wretched than a dog.

The basket-maker went into his cottage, and fetched a cup of milk and a good piece of bread. He gave them to Dick, saying, "Here, Richard, take this, and eat what God has given you; and

since you wish to lead a new life, suppose you begin by asking a blessing on the breakfast he sends you."

Dick put his hands together, but he did not know what to say, for he had never asked a blessing in his life. Joseph saw what was the case, and taking off his hat, he said, "O Lord, who art kind even to the unthankful and evil, look upon this lad; bless this bread to his use, but above all give him the bread of life which is in Christ Jesus."

"Yes, I hope he will," said Dick; (for he did not know what Amen meant,) and he ate with a good appetite.

While he breakfasted, Joseph talked to him about God and his word.

J. My poor Richard, I am afraid you are almost as ignorant as a heathen. I fear you are like the child of an idolater. You hardly know whether you have a soul to be saved.

D. What need I to be saved from?

J. From the wrath to come—that dreadful wrath with which God in his justice will punish all sin at the day of judgment.

D. Is that quite certain? Are you sure that God will punish all sinners?

J. Yes, I am quite sure, for the Bible tells us so. Christ himself said, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28, 29.)

D. Will it be very dreadful to be condemned in this manner?

J. "The wicked are reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day

of wrath." (Job. xxi. 30.) And the King will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.) You will read more about this in the word of God; and remember, Richard, I say *remember*, what that book tells us *is true*!

D. That frightens me; how shall I escape?

J. Read the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm. You will find it is impossible to escape from God. "Whither shall I flee from thy presence, for even the darkness hideth not from God." (Psalm cxxxix.)

Dick held down his head, and was silent for a few minutes. He then said, "I wish I could change my conduct, for I am not happy, and I am afraid I shall go to hell if I die."

J. Ah! my lad, you told me so the other day, when you laid in bed after your father had given you that good beating. I am afraid, after all, it is only the horsewhip that has brought you to this way of thinking.



D. You don't believe me, and I do not wonder, for I have often told lies; but, indeed, it is not for fear of the horsewhip that I wish to change my conduct.

J. Are you quite sure? Now tell me the truth, and nothing but the truth, Do you really desire to amend your evil ways?

D I do not quite understand what you mean by ‘amend,’ but I know this, that if my father had horsewhipped me, and even broken my bones, I should wish the same. I feel something in my heart which wishes for this change.

J. How long have you wished for this change?

D. Ever since the day when neighbour Maud spoke to me as I sat upon the bench at the door; I pretended not to mind what she said, but I could not help thinking about it. And then last night when I saw her look so comfortable as she read the Bible, and prayed with Jenny and your servant, it struck me still more. I thought of it all night while I laid upon the leaves, and this morning I was thinking about it when I saw Jenny, and what she said made me quite determined. Now do believe me, Mr. Joseph, when I say I do wish to change my conduct. Yes I do, indeed I do.

The basket-maker held out his hand, and said, “Well, Richard, I cannot help believing you.—Since you really wish this, and since God, I trust, draws you to him, I will not keep you back. You shall find me your friend; I will be a true parent to you. Here, strip the bark off these twigs while I go to your father.

Dick felt as if a load was taken off his heart. He set to work cheerfully, and that was more than he had done for the last twelvemonth.

After some time Joseph returned; he looked pleased, and as soon as he came in sight he called out, “The horsewhip is put away; you may return home without fear, your father will receive you kindly.”

Dick jumped up, and threw his arms round Joseph, and thanked him with tears in his eyes.

J. And I have got your father to consent that

you may come here, to me, every day for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening, that you may learn my trade; and he also promises that you shall not be called upon to wait in the public-house on Sundays. Have I done right, Dick; say, perhaps you do not like this plan?

Dick again threw his arms round the old man's neck, and said, "Father Joseph, may I come this afternoon?"

J. Yes, my lad, if you please, I shall expect you; but go now to your father, and mind what he says. If he scolds you, remember you have deserved it, and do not reply again.

Dick was running off. Joseph said, "Stop a moment. What must we call you in future, Idle Dick, or Industrious Richard?"

"You will see in a few days," said Dick," and was out of sight in an instant; but he came back in the afternoon.

You will be glad to hear that he was called 'Diligent Dick.'—Yes, he was so changed by the blessing of God upon the counsels and instructions of old Joseph, that in a few months he was quite different from what he used to be.

Every day he became more industrious at his work, more correct in his behaviour, and neater in appearance, milder in his language, and more regular in all he had to do.

What produced this great change?

It was by the use of means which God has appointed, and which he has promised to bless. I mean by the study of the Scriptures and prayer.

Joseph read some portions every day with Richard, and set him some verses, which he learned against the next day.

While they were at work, Joseph used to talk



with him, and explain to him the truths which are in the Bible. On Sundays he especially attended to this, and talked with him about the love of our Heavenly Father, who sent Jesus as a Saviour for poor lost sinners, and to save children, as well as grown persons.

Joseph often used to pray with Richard, and was very faithful in telling him of his faults; but he always did this the kind way pointed out by the word of God, and by shewing him from that book the example of some child of God who was remarkable for some good quality, the very reverse of the fault which Richard had committed.

Dick had been called 'good-for-nothing' while he kept bad company, but when he became acquainted with the truths of Scripture, he forsook his evil companions; and though they pressed him to come among them, he steadily refused to do so. You may be sure he found out the little girl and gave her back her half crown.

His former wicked associates were astonished at this change. They made game of him, and used to insult him; but all the good people in the village, all those who loved God, the true disciples of Jesus, welcomed Richard as a friend;



and when they saw him going by, they used to say, “ Aye, there he is,—when he despised instruction he was an idle vagabond and a good-for-nothing fellow ; but since he has delighted in the word of God, and studied its precepts, he is become an honest, industrious, worthy lad. O ! how wonderful a change the grace of the Lord has made in that poor lad ! ”





THE LADY-BIRD.

I WAS busy, and my little boy Charles, just seven years old, was playing about the room. All at once he ran up to me, and asked me to look at a little insect which was crawling upon a piece of paper in his hand.

Charles. Look, papa, at this insect: how very small it is! How fast it moves its little feet. Why did God make such a little thing?

Father. It is a Lady-bird. I will put it under the microscope, and you will then see something more than you expect.

C. Quick, papa, else it will fly away.

I put the insect under the microscope without hurting it. To the naked eye it did not appear any thing particular. Its back was red, with black and white spots; underneath, it was of a greyish colour.

On looking through the microscope I was struck with wonder. Its back, which had appeared so plain, was beautiful; the red part I found was covered with a sort of elegant feathers, all ranged

in the most exact order; the black and white spots were as regular as the squares of a chess board, and were formed of something like scales, of the clearest white, bordered with others of a bright shining black; it was divided lengthways by a black line, and the two sides were exactly alike.

“How wonderful are the works of God,” I exclaimed, “Who would have supposed that this little insect was so beautifully and wonderfully made? How perfect are all His works!”

Charles was in a great hurry to see for himself. He looked several minutes without speaking, and then turned towards me with surprise.

C. Oh, papa, how beautiful it is! How wonderful that God should give a little thing like that such a beautiful shining dress. Did you see his head, and the scales on his back? They shine like silver or glass. How beautiful, how very beautiful!

F. My boy, since our heavenly Father is so great, so wise, and so powerful, since he has taken such care of such a little insect, think what care he takes of his children, whom he so loved that he gave his only and well-beloved son, Jesus Christ, to die for their sins, that those who believe in him may be saved from the wrath to come.

C. Yes; I recollect reading in St. Matthew, how he told his disciples that they “were of more value than many sparrows.” They must then be of more value than this little insect; and since God has given it such a beautiful dress, surely he will take care of us. Thank you, papa, for having let me see the Lady-bird, for it shows us how good and kind the Lord is, and how wonderful are his works.

F. You are right Charles; it is a mark of

God's love, that he causes us to know and feel his wisdom and power. Above all, it is very kind of him to enable us to trust in him, and to feel assured that he takes care of us. That he sees us, and keeps us from evil.

C. As the little book says,

“ He keeps from harm, he gives me food,
“ And every day he does me good.”

I then turned the glass box in which the insect was shut, and looked at the other side. Its three pair of legs were placed so that it could move properly; they were covered with very small scales which protected them, and yet allowed them to move in every direction. Its little feet were joined on with the utmost nicety; they moved with perfect freedom, and all was most regular and beautiful.

“ How perfect and how active,” said I, “ How wonderful in every part! Where is there a workman, however skilful, that can at all imitate any part of this Lady-bird? And, if one was made, where is the man, even supposing him to be the wisest person upon earth, that would enable it to move about as this does?”

C. Papa, you told us one day there were some persons who said the world was made by chance? What do they mean? How can that be?

F. There is no such thing as chance. All things were made by God. He is the Creator and Preserver of all things. If any body says this little Lady-bird was made by chance, I should think he had never seen how wonderfully it is formed, for it could only have been made by some very wise and powerful Being.

C. But what do these people mean, who say

that Nature has made the animals, the plants, and even men ?

F. In general they are ignorant people, without religion, who, instead of giving glory to God, and blessing him as their Creator and Preserver, endeavour to put out even his name from their writings, and their discourses, and say Nature made this or that thing, instead of saying that God, or the Lord, made them.

C. Then it was God that made all things ! He preserves us every moment, and yet very often we do not think about him. Why is this, papa ?

F. My dear ; our hearts are by nature far from God, and do not love him. Sin is the cause of this ; it turns our hearts aside from our heavenly Father, who created us. Thus some persons wish that it was not God who protects us and keeps us from harm, and gives us all that is for our good.

C. Ah ! papa ; then there are but few persons who love God and trust in him ?

F. It is only *his children* who love him, and rejoice to praise Him, and bless His name, who trust sincerely and with all their hearts in Him. To be a *true Christian*, is to have the heart renewed and cleansed from its sins, by the precious blood of Christ, being made holy by the Spirit of God. We are, by nature, like that little insect. God has given it life and motion, nourishment, clothing, and all it wants ; but it does not think about him, nor wish to thank him.

C. But when we are naughty we must be worse than the Lady-bird, for it does not offend God and sin against Him.

F. You are right, my dear boy ; those who love sin are not so good as that little insect. Then how thankful should we be, that Christ Jesus our Lord died to redeem us from the curse and power

of sin : and that he makes those who seek him children of God, uniting them to himself for ever.

C. I hope God will be my father, and love me. Surely he will take care of me, for he gave his Son to save me. How kind that was !

F. Then, my dear child, love this Saviour ; try to glorify Him, and remember the words of St. Paul, “ He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Remember this Lady-bird ; how beautifully and wonderfully it is made by the power of our Lord. Above all things seek with confidence for his blessing, who, through Christ Jesus, is your heavenly father, and will not forget you.





THE LOST CHILD.

MRS. SINCLAIR was a good and tender mother and very seldom left her little family.

One afternoon she was obliged to go out, and as it was to visit a sick person, she thought it best not to take with her either Charlotte, who was five years old, or Charles, who was just three years and a half. Her eldest son, Ernest, was gone out with his father, and there was nobody left at home except the servants and the children. Mrs. Sinclair spoke particularly to Fanny, the nurse maid, telling her to great care of Charles and Charlotte.

The nurse took the children into the garden; they then ran about in the meadow, while she gathered them some nosegays, and after some time they returned towards the house, and again played about in the garden.

While they were there Fanny discovered that she had lost her handkerchief, and instead of asking the cook to fetch her one, she told Charlotte

to take care of her brother for a minute or two, while she ran to the nursery to get one.

When Fanny opened her drawer, she found somebody had tumbled her best gown, and her huswife and balls of cotton were all mixed about among her clothes. Now, Fanny liked to see her things neat, and in their proper places, so she could not bear to leave them in disorder, and while she set her drawer to rights, above a quarter of an hour passed away.

All at once she recollected the children, and looking out of the window she saw Charlotte very busy undressing her doll, and called to her, "Where is Charles?"

"Oh, there he is," said Charlotte, without looking up.

"I do not see him," cried Fanny, and ran down stairs as fast as possible.

She looked round but he was not in sight.

"He was here just this minute," said Charlotte; "he was looking at a snail which was crawling by that monkshood."

Fanny now began to be frightened, and ran to the kitchen window to see if Charles was there. The cook had not seen him; she then ran round the garden, but he was not to be found. The cook now came, and they looked in the yard, and examined the dog kennel, for Charles had once gone and laid himself down along with "Captain;" but now Captain was asleep in his kennel quite alone.

They then thought he might have gone to the kitchen garden, but the door was locked, and Mrs. Sinclair had taken the key. Fanny next examined the shrubbery at the end of the garden, and the gate which opened into the meadow, but that was shut.

You may suppose how anxious Fanny now felt; the sun was just setting, and not a sound was heard except the mill, and the sheep-bells at a distance. At this moment, Mr. Sinclair, who had just returned, met her, and asked what was the matter, and where the children were.

Fanny, (bursting into tears.) O, Sir, Charlotte is up stairs; but—

Mr. Sinclair. But what! Where is Charles?

Fanny cried very bitterly, and could not answer.

Mr. S. Where is he? What is the matter?

The cook then came, and said, “Sir, Charles is lost.”

Mr. S. Lost! What do you mean! lost! when, and how?

Cook. We have been looking for him this half hour, Sir; he was just before that time in the broad walk with his sister; but we cannot find what is become of him.

Mr. Sinclair appeared struck; he was silent for a minute, but his lips moved as if he was uttering a short prayer. He then inquired very earnestly, but calmly, where they had looked.

F. Oh, every where, every where, Sir; Oh how unhappy I am

Ernest. I dare say you are, but why could not you take care of the child?

Mr. S. Ernest, this is not a moment to give way to anger; we must examine how it happened afterwards; but God knows where your brother is, I trust he will enable us to find him; quick, we must lose no time; I dare say he has got into the meadow.

F. Sir, the gates are both shut.

Mr. S. The smallest gate easily shuts to, and

a gust of wind may have closed it after he had gone through.

Ernest and his father then went into the meadow. On one side was a copse, through which there was a path, and on the other side the ground rose till it became a steep hill, and sloped down on the other side rather suddenly towards the lake.

“Cross the meadow, Ernest, and go up the hill,” said his father; “I will go round through the copse, and meet you.”

Ernest made haste, and called out, “Charles, Charles,” as he ran, for he was very fond of his little brother: “Charles, Charles, where are you? Oh, I wish I knew where you are gone.”

He then recollected what his father had said, and as he loved and feared God, he thought, “O Lord, thou knowest where Charles is gone, direct me where to find him.”

He then felt encouraged and ran on. I dare say my readers remember the beautiful text, “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth.” It is in the 145th Psalm. Yes, God hears even the youngest child who asks for his help in faith.

Ernest ran up the hill as fast as he could, though it was very steep and covered with furze bushes.

You may imagine his joy when he got near the top, and saw little Charles about two hundred yards before him, running along a very dangerous path, which was full of rough stones; on one side the ground sloped towards the wood, and on the other it was a precipice towards the lake.

Poor little Charles was crying very sadly: he stopped and wiped his eyes with his pinafore, and

then ran on again, and then stopped again and cried, and then ran on again.

“Charley, my dear Charley,” said Ernest.

Charley stopped and looked behind him.

“Oh, my dear Charles,” said Ernest, leaping over the bushes and catching him in his arms, “God has preserved you.”

Presently their father came up. “Thank God,” he exclaimed, and taking Charles in his arms he kissed him, and they hastened back to the house.

Mrs. Sinclair had just come in, and was deeply grieved at what had happened; but instead of giving way to grief, or flying into a passion, she inquired what had been done to search for him, and finding that proper measures were taken, she went into her own room, and prayed that her little Charles might be brought back again in safety.

While she was thus employed, she heard Ernest’s voice at a distance: “Here he is; here he is; we have found him?” She opened the window, and exclaimed, “Oh! where, where, let us be thankful!”

Mr. Sinclair was carrying him in his arms. — The poor child had fallen asleep, but he was much agitated, and sobbed deeply. They laid him on his bed, and by degrees he became more calm.

Fanny stood at the further end of the room; she was still weeping, but her tears were tears of joy.

“Fanny,” said her mistress, “come here; I have cause to blame you very much, and should do so, but I know you are not accustomed to be careless, and I see you deeply feel the consequences of your neglect. Learn from what has happened, that a very trifling neglect of our duty

may be the cause of a very serious evil. If you had attended to your duty and my orders, what painful feelings would you have saved both yourself and us. You are young ; never, never forget this lesson, and entreat the Lord to improve it for your good."

" We may all learn a lesson from it," said Mr. Sinclair ; " my grief at missing Charles, and my fear lest some accident had befallen him, made me think of the goodness of our heavenly father towards us. I said to myself, God compares his love towards his children, to that which I feel for little Charles ; surely, then, I ought not to fear that he will leave me, or forsake me ; and if I should be so unhappy as to wander from his paths, surely I may hope that he will seek for me, and lead me back again."

Mrs. S. That reminds me of what our Saviour said, when he compared himself to the good shepherd who goes to seek for the sheep that has wandered from the fold, and having found it, carries it home, rejoicing.

Ernest. When I saw how unhappy little Charles was, it made me think how miserable those are who wander from the ways of the Lord ; and when I see how glad we all are, that dear little Charles is brought home in safety, it reminds me of the joy there will be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and is brought back again.

Mr. S. Since our Lord has been pleased to try us in this manner for a short time ; let us entreat that he would bless this trial to our hearts, and let us not forget the thanks which we owe to him. He is indeed merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Like as a father pitieth

his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

The hour for family prayer was now come. Mr. Sinclair read the 103d Psalm, and while he endeavoured to bless the Lord for all his benefits, he did not forget the mercy which they had so lately experienced.

Before she went to rest, Mrs. Sinclair looked at little Charles; he just woke, and smiled at his mother, gave her a sweet kiss, and then went comfortably to sleep again.



REAL CHARITY.

THE winter had just set in. The weather was severe, and there was every appearance that the poor would have to undergo many hardships. Mr. Halton, a faithful minister of Christ in Switzerland, mentioned in his sermon that it was necessary to make collections for them.

"My dear people," said he, "let us remember the love wherewith Christ hath loved us; he, who

is the only son of the father, and heir of all things 'for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' (2 Corinthians viii. 9.) Remember also the words of the Psalmist, 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.' My dear friends, there are many poor persons amongst us. Some are too old or too feeble to work ; if the weather continues severe, others will not be able to get employment ; and there are several whose families are so numerous that they are in difficulties in the most favourable times. You know, that old people and children, in particular suffer much in cold weather. Recollect these persons are our brethren ; and I trust that some among them have been brought from darkness to light, to the knowledge and love of Christ. These, especially, we ought not to neglect, (Gal. vi. 10.) and I am glad to find that some of our number have resolved to do as they have done before. They have determined to labour harder than usual, to assist in supporting these feeble brethren, remembering the words of our Lord as mentioned by the apostle, (Acts xx. 35.) 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' I hope many of us are willing to follow this example."

After the sermon a collection was made ; it was larger than usual, and, during the week following, several persons sent money and clothes for the same purpose.

Susan was the daughter of a shoemaker. Both her parents feared God. She had heard the sermon, and as she walked home she thought a good deal of what the minister had said about the old people and children. Her mother had been forced to stay at home to nurse the baby, but she asked her daughter about the sermon.

"It is our duty," said she, when Susan had related the particulars; "it is our duty to assist the poor. All we possess was given to us by God, and it is our duty to help his children and people."

Susan sat silent for some time: she then said, "Mother, you know that father pays me a half-penny for every pair of shoes I bind, and he lets me do what I please with the money: suppose I ask him to send it to our minister, for the poor. And you promised to buy me a pair of clogs at Christmas, but these old ones will last me some time longer, and you know I never have chilblains, so if you please, mother, you can send that money also."

The mother gave her daughter a kiss of affection and pleasure. The father entered, and inquired what they were talking about. His wife told him.

Father. It is very right, for there are many amongst us who are much distressed; our minister told me that Old Simon is quite paralytic, and his daughter is ill of a fever and keeps her bed. Suppose we only have meat for our dinner twice a week this winter, we shall be better able to help our neighbours.

This was agreed to, and also that Susan should be allowed to give what she had proposed; her father said he would pay what she earned every week to their minister. "Would not it be better," said the little girl, "to put it into the poor's box without saying any thing about it?"

F. It is the same in the end, my dear; but I think our minister would be glad to receive it himself. It is, as I may say, the first-fruit you have produced; he has taken much pains in teaching you, and a gardener rejoices to gather the fruit from the trees he has planted.

Mother. You are right, Susan, in not wishing

that your alms should be seen of men, as our Lord said in his sermon on the mount, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your father which is in heaven." (Matt. vi. 1.) But I think, with your father, that it will be proper in this instance, to show our minister that you desire to obey the will of the Lord.

Susan very wisely thought that her parents knew best what was proper, so she only was anxious to bind as many shoes as she could, that there might be the more money to help the poor children: she had learnt, and she did not forget, the 5th commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The next morning was Monday, she rose early, read a chapter, and prayed as usual, she then set to work and had finished half a shoe before breakfast? She worked that day as hard as she could, and half an hour longer than usual, so she trimmed a pair more than she did in general.

But do not suppose she looked as if she were



proud of what she had done, or that she was less active in doing what it was her regular business to perform in the family. She was ready to nurse the baby or to do any thing else her mother directed.

She did this from love to God and therefore did not merely try to get her parents' praise. She was more attentive than ever to do what they wished, and did not say a word about her having risen earlier or worked harder than usual. Tuesday, Wednesday, and all the rest of the week, passed just like Monday. Mark this, my little reader ; for it often happens that young folks determine to do something which is very right and proper, but in a few days they are tired of it.

Now Susan had begun this work in a right manner, she prayed in her mind before she spoke to her mother. She acted as the Bible directs, honouring her father and mother by asking their approval, so we need not be much surprised that she was able to keep firm to her resolution, and that the whole week passed without her feeling tired, because she had been so busy and had played so little.

This week she earned threepence more than usual ; and on Sunday morning her father put into the minister's hand eightpence, which was the whole of her earnings, telling him whence it came, and what was to be done with it. Susan and her mother were going out of church ; when she saw her father go up to the minister, she could not refrain from looking to see what passed : the minister appeared pleased.

Christmas day came, it was cold, wet, and dirty. Susan could not help thinking of the new clogs ; she was silent for a few minutes, when her

mother inquired if she really had made up her mind to do without them ?

“ Yes dear mother,” at last, said she, sewing away very busily, and without looking up ; “ I have not to go out much in the wet. To be sure I should like to have them to wear on Sunday ; —but then,—perhaps that is because I should like the neighbours to see them, and *that* I am sure is not a good reason.”

M. Then you have made up your mind to go without a new year’s gift, for I do not intend to buy you any thing else ?

Susan. Mother, I do not want a new year’s gift. I have all I want, and even more than I need provided for me every day, through the blessing of God, by your kindness. There are a great many boys and girls in the village who will not have any new year’s gift ; and they have not got thick shoes and warm frocks as I have.

M. Then I am not to buy the clogs ?

S. No, mother ; but ask father to give the money they would cost, next Sunday, with the rest.

The new clogs were not bought, and Susan contrived to pass the winter without them. Every week (for she did not miss one) her father gave her earnings to the minister ; it was always sixpence or sevenpence, and two weeks it amounted to tenpence ! When the snow fell very fast, and the air felt very keen and frosty, Susan was happy to think that her pence were keeping some of the poor little children from the cold.

Now I will relate what was done with Susan’s money. Her father requested the minister to apply it for the use of some one family, and particularly for clothing a poor child. There was a widow who had one little boy, they were very

poor, he was bare-footed and almost naked : the mother was a good woman, so the minister bought clothes for her son, and advanced the money till Susan's contributions were enough to repay him, and when the price of the clogs was added, only about a third remained unpaid.

One day, in the beginning of February, the shoemaker told Susan to accompany him to the minister's house, as he was going to take home some work. The fields were all covered with snow, she put on her thick shoes, which she had lined with flannel, and followed her father.

When they arrived at the minister's house, he spoke very kindly to Susan ; taking out a little account book he showed her father how he had disposed of his daughter's earnings. " The jacket and trowsers are now quite paid for, and a nice cap besides ;" said he. The shoemaker thanked him, and they returned homewards. " Oh, it is cold, so very cold," said Susan, shrugging up her shoulders as she run along the path. " Do look, father, at those poor birds pecking about in the road, I am sure they can find very little there."

F. Our heavenly father does not forget them. Remember the words of our Lord, " Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly father feedeth them : " and not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without his knowledge. (Matt. vi. 26. x. 29.)

Just then they passed by the house where the poor widow lived, whose son had been clothed by Susan's money. School was over, and little Ned came running along the path full of glee. He looked very comfortable ; he had on a nice brown jacket and a warm cap ; he was swinging

his hands and clapping them together, and did not seem at all cold.

“Well, master Ned, you seem very gay;” said the shoemaker. Ned laughed, and ran into his mother’s cottage.

“His mother has taken good care of him;” said Susan.

“And so has my daughter,” added her father; “for, thank God, he put it into your heart to clothe him. Our minister just now told me, he bought those clothes for little Ned with the money you sent him.”

Susan was quite surprised; she could not have supposed that her little earnings would have done so much good. Tears of joy came into her eyes, and when they reached home she went into her own room, and kneeling down blessed God, for having inclined her to do what made her so happy.

Can any boy or girl read this history without thinking, “How much better it is to spend my money in making other people happy, than wasting it in idle toys. How much better it will be for me to rest contented without things which cannot do me any real good, that I may help those who want the necessaries of life.”





PROVIDENCE;

Or, the Mother and her Child.

ONE fine afternoon in autumn, Samuel, a labourer in the village of Ancenis, called his daughter Fanny, and told her to get her hat and cloak, to accompany him on a visit to a friend in the next village, who was ill.

The weather was fine, and the path between the villages was very pleasant. Part of the way was between two hedges full of berries of various colours, it then passed over an open down which commanded a beautiful prospect, and at last, winding through a thick wood, came out into some rich meadows.

Although Samuel was a poor labourer, without much education, and had lived all his life in the country, he was not insensible to the beauty of the works of God in creation. He had been accustomed from childhood to read God's holy word, and had drawn from thence much that instructed his mind, with regard to the things of this world, as well as the knowledge that made him wise unto salvation.

Thus he could enjoy the beauties of the country, and the lovely objects of nature always appeared new and interesting. As he found much true enjoyment in these contemplations, which directed his thoughts and his love towards God, he endeavoured to induce his children also to take pleasure in them. He used to take them with him into the fields, and often pointed out to them various instances of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, who made all things.

Fanny was only twelve years old, but she already began to perceive that knowledge is precious ; and preferred her father's instructions to idle gossiping with the girls of the village. She was particularly fond of listening to her parents' friends, and always tried to learn something from their conversation ; so that she was very glad to accompany her father in his visit that afternoon.

As the father and his daughter walked together, they conversed about the goodness of the Lord, who forgets none of his creatures, not even the smallest and most insignificant.

“ Look round, my dear,” said Samuel, stopping at the highest part of the down, from whence the view was very extensive, “ see those villages, the woods, and the river ; every place you behold is peopled with an innumerable multitude of creatures of various kinds.



“Some walk upright, others crawl upon the ground; others burrow into the earth, and form their habitation under the surface; others fly aloft, and traverse the air in every direction; others swim in the waters. Throughout the whole of creation, every part is the habitation of some animal, or reptile, or insect. Even in the woods, among the leaves of the trees, in the fruits they bear, in the earth from whence they grow, nay, even among the stones, there are some living things. Now, whether they are great or small, whatever they are, not one of them is forgotten by Him who made it.”

As they walked, Samuel said, “God’s wonderful power is over *all* his works, from the vast whale which inhabits the seas, to the little insects which are found in every drop of the water of yonder pool, but which cannot be seen without the aid of a glass.”

Fanny. Is it possible, father, that God can take all this care of every animal and insect, even of spiders, ants, grasshoppers, and worms?

Samuel. Recollect, Fanny, that these things seem so insignificant to you, because they are less than you; and appear to be of no use to you. But look at the web which the spider is weaving



upon that bush; examine carefully what this skilful artist is about; what skill, what regularity, and attention is shewn, in its net made from that slender thread. In the first place observe the three or four cords which support the whole; they are fastened to the branches, and are much stronger than the rest of the web; then notice these more slender threads which are fixed to the others and meet together in the centre: upon these threads, which remind us of the spokes of a wheel, the spider fixes finer threads in circles, which are smaller and smaller from the outside to the middle. Observe how this little insect has placed each circle at exactly the same distance from the others, and how these circles are tighter as they are nearer the centre. There, now it is finished. The spider has completed her beautiful work. Now she has taken her post in the middle of her web, her eight feet are placed upon its threads, and she watches for the slightest motion which is made by any insect that touches her web.—Now, my girl, can we suppose that God who made this insect, and gave her this surprising skill, will forget her, and leave her so that all her labour and pains will be useless! Surely not; let us wait a little and see. There, now, watch that little fly. Ah, he is caught. See, the spider is upon him in a moment; observe, she has entangled him in some threads, and now she has killed him, and is feeding upon him. She has food enough for to-day. God has provided for her.

F. Father, don't you hear a little noise, as if somebody was filing or sawing very gently?

S. That is a little animal which God remembers as well as the spider. Don't stir, and you will see him presently. There,—there he is.

F. What that pretty, very, very little mouse? Did he make that noise?

S. Yes, look here, I will shew you what it was. See under this leaf two pieces of nut shell. The little field mouse held this nut in his two fore paws, and with his long sharp teeth gnawed, or, as it were, filed away the shell; he then ate away the kernel and is now gone to look for something else.

F. Oh, father, how kind all this is. How well it is planned. Then there is food for every little animal and insect. How great and how good God must be, who orders all things!

By conversations like this, Samuel instructed his children. He took every opportunity to draw their attention towards the eternal God, who, although he does not converse with men upon earth, as before the fall, yet shews his presence by many striking instances of love and mercy.

As Samuel and his daughter continued their walk, they came to the skirt of a wood, where they found a young woman sitting by the side of a spring, with an infant in her arms. The poor little child was crying very bitterly, its mother wept also, and appeared quite overcome with grief.

S. Poor child, how sadly you are crying. My good woman, be more calm; tell me what is the matter?

The Mother. O, Sir, my child is dying; my child, my dear child.

S. No, I do not think so; it is in great pain, but it does not seem likely to die; God has sent this trouble, and he can remove it. Trust in him; take courage and exert yourself, and all will be well. Tell me what is to be done.

M. Ah, Sir, you do not know what has happened. The birds yonder have food for their

young, but my little one is dying with hunger—with hunger! I have no milk for it, and have walked all day across the mountains without meeting any help. Oh, my boy, my dear boy, don't cry so sadly. If you did but know how unhappy it makes your mother.—

Samuel was silent, and deeply grieved. “My God,” said he, “be pleased to hear the cries of this poor creature, and shew us what we should do.”

Fanny said to her father, “Our neighbour Nanny weaned little Charles yesterday, I am sure she would be glad to take this little child.”

S. That is a good thought, my dear; I trust God has reminded you of it. Let us make haste homewards; this poor woman and her child need our help much more than the person we were going to see. Come, my good woman, take courage; try and follow us, and your child will soon be comforted. Fanny, let us go the pathway by the willows, that is the nearest.

As Fanny walked along, she thought about the woman and her child, and felt in some doubt and difficulty. “How is it,” said she to herself; “how is it that God, who is so great, so powerful, and so good, should provide for the spider and the little mouse, but should neglect that little child, so weak and so helpless as not to be able even to ask for what it wants, and should let it be in such a state that it must very soon die! Why did God take away its mother's milk? It is very strange!” These last words she said aloud.

S. What is so very strange?

Fanny hesitated, and was afraid to tell what had passed in her mind, lest it should be displeasing to God. So she said, “It was something, father, which I do not quite understand; but I will think again about it.”

S. You had better tell me, Fanny ; do not be afraid of letting me know what it was. Were you thinking about that little child, and wondering why God appeared to have forgotten it, while He takes care of mice and spiders ?

F. (colouring.) I was afraid to say so ; but I could not help wondering at it. But I did not think that God was unjust, only I did not understand his ways.

S. There is Nanny coming this way ; we will talk again about this subject by and by. Run to her, for you can run faster than I.

Fanny ran like a deer, and told their neighbour all that had happened. Nanny hastened to Samuel, rejoicing that she could be of use. " This is, indeed, providential," said she ; " give me the child, I will treat it as if it was my own. Thank God, my good woman," said she to the mother : " he who made your child has directed it here ; see, it is as well pleased with my milk as if it were your own.

Rebecca who was the mother of the child, fell upon her knees and clasped her hands together. She wept, but her tears were not tears of bitterness or grief ; she was struck with a sense of the unexpected succour she had so providentially received, and she felt pained that she had for a moment doubted the faithfulness of the Lord.

" My friend," said Samuel, kindly raising her up, " you see that He, who feeds even the young ravens, has not forgotten your child."

" I have sinned," replied the mother ; " I feel that I have sinned ; may God pardon my evil complaints. But it is a long day for a mother. Yes it is a very long day, when every moment is marked by a cry of pain from her child ! I looked to heaven, but saw not the Lord ; I was like

Hagar in the desert, (Gen. xxi. 15.) and forgot him."

S. The Lord directed you to find succour, and has many other blessings in store for you, of which you are not now aware.

Fanny was struck with the words of the young mother. She came to her father, and whispered to him, "I also forgot the Lord; will he forgive me?"

Samuel kissed his daughter. "My child," said he, "remember, that although our Lord sees our faults and evil deeds, he is ready to pardon those who seek forgiveness through Christ. He has said, 'Ask, and ye shall receive;' and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Turn to him with your whole heart, he is full of mercy, and his compassions fail not."

While thus conversing, they arrived at Nanny's cottage. The little child had fallen asleep in the nurse's arms, and she put it safely into the cradle of her own child, who was gone to a friend to be weaned.

She then prepared some food for the poor mother, who was quite exhausted with anxiety and fatigue. While thus employed, she repeated, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy."

S. Yes, neighbour, let us praise the providence of God who has been pleased to send you another infant, for a short period deprived of its mother, instead of your own.

N. Oh, Samuel, when you learn the whole of this instance of providence, you will indeed adore him with wonder : I will tell you presently, when this good woman has taken something to eat, and has laid down to rest herself. My husband is away for three or four days, so she may stay here till he returns, and, if God pleases, we shall be able to think what had best be done for her.

The mother appeared very thoughtful, and took no notice of what was said. Her hunger was soon satisfied ; she then arose, and taking Samuel by the hand, said, “ God will bless you ; for he has this day shewn, by your means, that he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the burning flax. I am a bruised reed, but I now feel strengthened ; and as to the flax, oil has been poured upon it, and the flame again shines forth.—This is from God.”

Samuel sent his daughter home, and then being left alone with Nanny, he said, “ What is this peculiar instance of God’s providence which you have discovered in the misfortunes and succour of that poor woman ? ”

N. I will tell you. Last week, my friend who has taken little Charles to wean, and who lives about twelve miles beyond the mountains, came to see me : among other inquiries, I asked respecting the state of her family as to religion. She shook her head, and unwillingly told me that she suffered a good deal of trouble from her brother-in-law, a profane and irreligious character, who has lately returned home from a foreign country, where he had acquired many bad habits, and

among other things had learned to scoff at religion. 'But what grieves me most of all,' added she, 'is his ill treatment to his poor wife, an excellent young woman, whom he married in a foreign country, and who has a child only a few months old.'

S. What is she the woman we found ?

N. I have no doubt of it, and for this reason : my friend told me that this cruel hard-hearted man more than once threatened to kill her and her child, if she continued to read her Bible, and attend a prayer-meeting which is held in their village.

S. Do you suppose that she is acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus, and that her heart is really devoted to the Lord ?

N. I understood she was a serious character and I now recollect that she was the daughter of a schoolmaster, a good man, who brought up his children in the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of the Saviour. You heard her refer to a passage in the Bible ?

S. Yes ; I noticed it.

N. My friend told me she often conversed with her sister-in-law upon serious subjects, and had no doubt God had blessed her soul.

S. But how came you so soon to think it was her ?

N. When my friend spoke of her troubles, I felt deeply affected for her unpleasant situation, and I have since then frequently wished that I could be of use to her. This evening I sadly missed my little Charles, and I took a walk to divert my thoughts. She came again into my mind, and I could not help thinking of the painful situation of a serious young woman, far from her home and her relations, and married to a

wicked man who treats her with the greatest unkindness.

S. It must indeed be a painful situation, and how deplorable such a union.

N. While I was thinking about her, I saw you by the willows with a young woman in a foreign dress, and an infant in her arms, it at once struck me that she must be the poor woman of whom I was thinking, for my friend, among other things, spoke of the dress she usually wore; and as we were walking along, I heard her say to herself, 'If I stop here, will not he find me?' I then felt sure that I was right in my conjecture.

S. Poor thing! it is *that* makes her so thoughtful. I recollect when I spoke to her, she said she had been all day travelling among the mountains.

N. I am sure it is her, and I hope the Lord has brought her here for some good.

S. O, ~~the~~ depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! I will tell my wife what has happened, and we will come in the morning and see what can be done for the young woman. Good night; may the peace of God be with you!

In the morning Samuel and his wife came to Nanny's cottage, and found her sitting before the door with the stranger, and suckling her child.

N. It is, as I supposed, it is Rebecca, my friend's sister-in-law. Samuel's wife spoke kindly to the young woman, and after a short conversation led her aside.

S. My wife is going to speak seriously to her. We do not think she has acted quite as the word of God directs.

N. Neighbour Samuel, remember the bad character and ill behaviour of her husband.

S. Do you not recollect I told you the other day that the faults of others did not excuse us for neglecting our own duty.

N. But would you have this woman and her child exposed to such barbarous treatment?

S. If she had continued enduring these things for the sake of God, and because he has said, "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God," 1 Pet. ii. 20. can you for a moment suppose that he would not have sustained her under her trials? Remember the words of St. Paul, "The woman that hath a husband which believeth not, and if he be pleased to live with her, *let her not leave him.*" 1 Cor. vii. 13.

Nanny felt convinced that Samuel was right.

His wife returned with Rebecca, whose eyes were full of tears.

S. My good Rebecca, I hope you feel that we desire to act as your parents, and only wish to speak for your good.

R. Yes, I feel it, my good friends; you have spoken to me from the Lord, and I needed your advice. I have done wrong, I have sinned against God by my impatience, He chastened me yesterday, but he did it as a tender father, and in mercy has, I trust, turned the evil I planned into good.

S's wife. I do hope that what has passed will prove an occasion of good, both to you and your husband.

Rebecca shook her head, and sighed as she looked at her child.

S. Do not limit the power of God. Have more faith; cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you. I intend to go to your husband to-day, and I hope my visit will not be without effect.



In the course of the day Samuel set out. He was absent three days, during which time his wife conversed a good deal with Rebecca; they also read the Bible, and prayed together. The young wife was deeply affected, and said, that as soon as Samuel returned she would ask him to take her home to her husband; adding, "I will endeavour to win him by my conduct, as the apostle directs, and how do I know but I may be the means of saving my husband." 1 Cor. vii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 1.

In the afternoon of the third day, while they were conversing upon the duties of a Christian, as a wife and a mother, they heard some one coming. "Here he is," said Rebecca, running to the door; "here is good Samuel."

S. Yes, Rebecca, and I have brought somebody with me; I am not alone, but am accompanied by a man, who I trust will in future endeavour to walk according to the will of Him who has protected you. Here, Dennis, (said he, raising his voice,) come in; Rebecca is waiting for you.

Dennis was her husband. He ran in, saying,

“ O, my dear Rebecca, forgive your unkind husband ; I have prayed to God to pardon me. O forgive me for all the injury I have done to you and our child.”

Rebecca was deeply affected, and unable to speak for some time. At length she said, “ The Lord is good. Dennis, I was coming home to ask your pardon, for while sinning against the Lord, I have sinned against you also ; I forgot that I was bound to obey you, and that I ought to have waited patiently, praying that the Lord would turn your heart.”

D. I trust I shall now be an altered man ; God sent this good man to me, and I feel convinced of my sin. We have both of us much reason to be thankful ; these are the wonderful dealings of his providence.

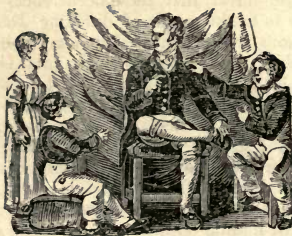
Fanny just then came to call her mother, and heard what Rebecca and her husband said about the providence of God. She remembered what she thought a few evenings before, and what she had said to her father. She watched for an opportunity of speaking to him, and said, “ Father, you have not yet spoken to me about what I said the other evening ; but I have thought about it a great deal, and I now clearly see that God had not forgotten the little baby and his mother, any more than the field mouse or the spider.”

S. You perceive these things, my girl, but as yet you know very little of what the Saviour has done. Consider further, that it was Rebecca’s grief, when she saw the suffering of her child, that made you think of Nanny, and it was from her I learned Rebecca’s hardships, and the evil conduct of her husband. That God, who is all powerful, all wise, and full of goodness, whose providence

orders even the smallest events, I trust has been pleased to direct that these occurrences should lead me to be the means of directing Dennis to his Saviour, and of reconciling him to his wife and child. Thus you now see that God has shewed his kindness to Rebecca, to her child, and to her husband, much more than to the spiders and animals of the field. He gives them their food in due season; but for his children he has provided a better gift, even "the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!" My girl, the providence of God is indeed wonderful, and his ways past finding out.

Fanny perceived the truth of what her father said. She felt in her heart that the ways of the Lord are above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts, and she determined in his strength never more to doubt the power, nor the tender mercies, of Him who does all things for the good of his children.





LUCY;

OR,

“ I will not be Naughty again, Papa.”

ONE day, Lucy's father was obliged to find fault with her for something she had done wrong. “ I will not be naughty again, papa,” said she; “ I promise you, I will not be so foolish again.”

I am sorry to say, that Lucy had been a very naughty girl; she was not so in general, but somehow she often forgot herself. Her most frequent fault was pride, for she thought herself much wiser, and much more clever than she really was, and this led her sometimes to disobey her parents and teachers, and to answer rather pertly. Lucy's mother was dead, but her aunt took care of her father's family. She was an excellent woman, and was very kind to Lucy, and tried always to teach her what was right. One morning she said, “ Lucy, my dear, bring your work; leave off playing with the cat, the clock has just struck ten.”



Lucy was so silly as not to mind what her aunt said, and disobeyed ; first in actions, and then in words ; for she continued to play with her cat, and spoke in a cross manner, “ You are always telling me, ‘ Come, bring your work ;’ you never let me play a minute.” “ Lucy,” said her aunt, “ you forget what you ought to do, and that God hears you. Is it not your duty to mind what I say ?” Lucy put down the cat, and walked very slowly across the room to fetch her work ; and, as soon as she was seated, muttered to herself, “ How tiresome it is to be obliged always to do as one is bid.”



In the evening, her father asked whether Lucy had been a good girl, and was very sorry to hear

what had happened; presently it was time for family prayer, he rang the bell, and the children and servants all came in.

Lucy did not know that her father was acquainted with what had happened, and I regret to add, that she had not shewn any sorrow at having been so naughty.

Her father opened the Bible, and read the sixth



chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. If you look at your Testament, you will find it begins thus, "*Children, obey your Parents in the Lord: for this is right.*"

When he had finished the chapter, he said a few words about what he had read, and observed that God desired to see a teachable spirit in children; and that they should do as the hymn reminded them,

" Whenever I'm saying my prayer,
I'll ask for a teachable heart."

He also spoke of the sinfulness of pride and

self-conceit, which led to disobedience to the will of the Lord.

“Children often suppose,” said he, “that they need not mind what they are told, unless they please; and then they sometimes murmur against those whom they ought to obey. A child who acts thus, in reality disobeys God, and refuses to take up the yoke of Christ. This is very plain, for if our Lord was to appear as he did when upon earth, and should enter the room while little boys or girls acted in this manner, I am sure they would hide their faces before the blessed Son of God. It would be quite clear, then, that they were doing wrong, and that they had forgotten that God sees them, although they do not see Him, and that he is not pleased with their conduct.

“Children should also remember that they are to obey their teachers, and those who are set over them, just the same as their parents; for as God gave this power to their parents, and they have placed them with their teachers, so children are to obey their teachers just the same as their parents.

“It is then necessary,” added he, speaking slowly and in an impressive manner, “that all children should be convinced that it is their duty to be obedient to all who are set over them. They must also remember, that in refusing to do what they are told, they disobey the commands of God.”

The family then knelt down, and the father prayed, that all who were then present, and especially the children, might humbly submit to the will of God, as set forth in his holy word.

Lucy’s conscience told her, that her father had

said this on her account ; when she rose from her knees, she felt very unhappy, and was afraid to go and kiss him as usual.

I hardly need remark, that when she felt that she had done wrong, she ought to have humbled herself and asked pardon of God, and then intreated her aunt to forgive her. But her pride would not let her do so, and she did not try to subdue it. Pride not only leads people to do wrong, but also causes them to persist in evil.

It was bed-time, and Lucy went to bed in this stubborn humour ; I need not say she was very unhappy. She did not venture to repeat her prayer, and that is a *very* bad sign indeed ; for when children dare not pray to God, it is a proof that their consciences tell them they have done wrong, and that they do not feel really sorry for what they have done.

The next morning, when Lucy awoke, she felt still more unhappy, and did not like the thought of meeting her father and her aunt. But ought not she to have been more unhappy because God saw her ? Is it not strange that a naughty child is afraid of being seen by a father, or a mother, or a teacher, but does not fear being seen by God ? for “ the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” It is very easy for a child to *say* this, but how few there are who shew by their actions that they *believe* it.

When Lucy was dressed, she ought to have said her prayers before she went down stairs. She felt troubled just as she had done the evening before. The voice of God whispered in her heart, “ Acknowledge your fault, and pray to be forgiven.” She also remembered our Lord’s kind invitation : “ Come unto me, all ye that are heavy

laden, and I will give you rest." But poor Lucy tried to put away these thoughts, and instead of kneeling down, she employed herself in other things; she was a long while washing her hands, then she folded up her clothes very neatly, and set the room to rights, and she recollected to feed her bird that morning, although at other times she frequently forgot it. I have often seen little folks act in this manner. When they know they have done wrong, their pride will not allow them to acknowledge their fault, but they are very careful to do *other* things right. They forget that they ought to do *all things* properly, so that if one is done wrong, the doing a great many other things right will not make up for it. But they try to escape from Him who is greater than our hearts, who knows all the thoughts, and discovers to us the evil that is in them.

All these little employments served to pass away the time, and to keep away thought; and Lucy was so silly as to wish for this. At last, she heard her father's voice, calling the family to come in to prayers. Lucy then began to go down stairs; she went down very slowly. When she came down to the parlour-door, she stopped a minute, and then entered the room; but she hung down her head, and looked very unhappy. Her father began to read as usual; it was the parable of the Prodigal Son. Lucy listened till he came to the verse, "I will arise, and go unto my father, and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." She was struck with these words, tears came into her eyes, and she hastily drew out her handkerchief to hide them.

Her father perceived what was passing in her heart, and when the chapter was finished, he

added a few words on the relief which we may find by humbling ourselves before God, and lamenting our offences like the prodigal.



“God is love,” said he; “his tender mercies are over all his works; he takes no pleasure in punishing us; but, on the contrary, in his mercy warns us against offending him; and when we have done wrong, he desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from the error of his ways; and, like a kind shepherd, He brings us back to himself.

“Let us remember that the Saviour, yes, the Son of God, gave himself for his sinful and wretched creatures. Why, then, should we doubt his love, and suppose that he will refuse to listen to us willingly? He does not take pleasure in seeing us in a state of enmity with him. No; his love is soon felt by a poor sinner, when he is convinced of his fault, and believes in the pardon which God the Father offers, through Jesus Christ, his Son.”

These words went to Lucy's heart. As soon as prayer was over, she hastened to her room, and kneeling down, prayed for pardon through the



blood of Jesus Christ. God, who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to grant those things which are asked in the name of Jesus Christ, (John xvi. 23.) was pleased to hear her prayer, and send an answer of peace.

Lucy now felt relieved from the heavy burden which oppressed her mind. She ran to her father's room, and opening the door, threw herself into his arms, exclaiming, "O, my dear papa, do forgive me; I wish I had not been naughty."

"My dear Lucy," said he, "then I trust God has been pleased to touch your heart, and has humbled your spirit before him. Poor girl! you refused the tender offers of mercy of our kind Saviour for a long time. O, Lucy, how could you harden your heart against a God so full of loving-kindness and tender mercies? Were you happy, when your mind was in that state? Were you able to pray, and read your Bible?"

Lucy. No, papa ; I did not like to think about God, and I was afraid to read his word.

Father. Poor girl ! so you avoided all thoughts of your heavenly Father and Redeemer. Were you really afraid to read God's holy word ?

L. But I am not afraid now, papa ; I have prayed to God in my own room, and I feel now as if he had pardoned me ; I feel happier now, and I will not be naughty again ; I promise you I will not.

F. Lucy, tell me the truth ; have you not often told your aunt and me that you would not be naughty again ?

L. Why, yes, papa, I have said so before ; several times.

F. Then you have several times broken your promise ; although, I believe, you intended to have kept it. How has this happened ?

L. Why, somehow, I was naughty again ; I forgot my promise.

F. But, my dear, how came you to forget it so easily, since you promised it of your own accord, and wished to keep your word ?

L. Perhaps, papa, it was because I did not pray to God to keep me from evil.

F. Yes ; it was because you made the promise in your own strength, trusting only to your own good resolutions. I will tell you something of which it reminds me.

One day, a gardener had planted two trees ; they were both of them very weak, and during the night, the wind loosened one of them. When the gardener came in the morning, he took a stake, and fixing it firmly in the ground, tied the tree to it. " Now," said he, " it is quite safe."

In the evening the wind was higher than before.

The tree which was tied to the stake remained firm in its place ; but the other was blown quite down, and the gardener found, the next day, that it was broken and quite spoiled.



“ This is a sad business,” said he ; “ I forgot that if one of these trees needed a stake to support it, the other would want one also.” He then looked round the garden very carefully, and wherever he found a tree that was weak, he placed a stake to secure it.

L. Oh, papa, I have found out what you mean ; —I was like the tree without a support, when I promised of myself, and without looking to God for strength to enable me to perform what I had promised ; and as I have always forgot this, I have so often done wrong.

F. My dear girl, remember this : we are sinners by nature ; and when we give way to anger, pride, envy, or any other sins, which are called the works of the flesh, we act in the manner to which we are most inclined. Then if we wish to do the will of God,—I mean those things which are

called the “fruits of the Spirit,”—we must look for a power to enable us to do them, different from that which is in our own hearts. So, when you said, just now, “I will not be naughty again, papa; I promise you I will not,” it was just as if that crab-tree which grows in the hedge should say, “I am determined that I will bear as good fruit as the golden pippin in the orchard.” You know that an apple-tree must be grafted with a good sort before it can bring forth good fruit. Suppose, now, that the crab-tree could speak, and really desired to bear nice apples, what would it say?



L. It must ask the gardener to graft it with some good sort, or else it would continue to bear just the same as usual.

F. Then what must my dear Lucy do, if she desires to bring forth the good fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance?

L. Then, dear papa, (as you said the other day,) I must ask the Saviour to cleanse me from my sins by his precious blood, that I may be sanctified by

the Holy Spirit, so that I may learn to do His will.

F. Yes, my dear, and if you earnestly seek the Saviour's grace, even a few days will shew a change in your behaviour.

Lucy kissed her father, and said, "Papa, will you pray for me?" "Yes," said he, "my dear, I trust God will enable me always to remember you in my prayers." Lucy then went to her aunt, and in a modest humble manner really and sincerely asked her to forgive what she had done wrong.

Perhaps, some day, you may read another story about Lucy, and learn whether she remembered her father's advice, and how God was pleased to bless her desire to do his will.





See page 107.

A LESSON OF MERCY.

It was the month of January; the fields and houses were covered with snow, and the skaters and sliders were gliding on the ice; the streets of the towns were covered with snow, and the poor people crowded to the wood merchants,* some to buy faggots, while others could only afford to purchase a few billets, just enough to make a little fire in their humble cottages.

Among them was a girl named Margaret, not quite ten years old. She was but poorly dressed, and she shivered with cold.

The little girl stood near a shed where a great many faggots were piled. She looked first at the wood and then at the money in her hand, yet did not enter the shed, but stood shivering in the street.

On the opposite side of the way lived Mr. Basil. His eldest son, Joseph, happened to be at

* In most parts of the Continent wood is used for fuel.

the window and saw this little girl examining the bundles of wood.

After looking at her for a few minutes, he thought she was some workman's daughter, and might not have money enough to buy the wood she was sent for. He was very sorry for this, and crossed over the road to her.

Joseph. It is very cold, my little girl, and you have neither bonnet nor gloves.

Margaret. I never had any, Sir; but I am not very cold.

J. What are you doing here; do you wish to buy one of these bundles of wood?

M. I should like to do so, but I am afraid that I have not got money enough.

J. For whom do you wish to buy the wood?

The little girl looked down and seemed rather troubled at this question.

J. Did your father or your mother send you for it?

M. No, Sir, I wanted to give it to Old Thomas?

J. Who is Old Thomas?

M. He is our neighbour. He is a mason, and he hurt his leg a fortnight ago, while removing some stones. He is unable to work, and is confined to his bed, and must be very cold.

J. Does he know that you intend to give him a bundle of wood?

M. I have not told him, Sir.

J. My little girl, how did you get this money?

M. It was paid me this morning for a pair of socks which I knit last week.

J. Is that your regular employment?

M. No, Sir, I work at the cotton factory; and my father, and mother, and little brother, work there also.

J. How could you find time to make the socks?

M. They were only small ones; I knit them last week, very early in the morning and during the dinner hour.

J. Then you have worked very hard to help your poor neighbour?

M. Was it not my duty, Sir? has not God told us to do so? [added she, modestly, and not in the boasting way in which some children talk about any good they have done.]

J. Did you buy any wood for Thomas before to-day?

M. No, Sir; last Saturday I had earned three-halfpence, but I lost them while I was running to the shop.

J. I suppose you were very sorry?

M. Why, Sir, I could not help it when they were gone. I hoped God would enable me to be more careful next time.

J. How much money have you now?

M. I have again got three-halfpence, and here they are, quite safe.

J. Well; let us ask what the bundles cost.

The price of each faggot was two-pence, and the wood-merchant said he could not afford to sell them for less. Poor Margaret was very sorrowful when she heard this, and she was going to depart, when Joseph said he would pay the other half-penny.

The little girl was filled with joy. She put down her three-halfpence, then caught up a bundle of wood and ran down the street as fast as her burden would let her. Joseph looked after her, and saw her turn into a court at some distance. He at first thought he would follow her, and go to see Old Thomas, but he recollected it was the time for his drawing lesson, and besides, he saw his father at the window beckoning to him.

"Who was that little girl?" said Mr. Basil.

Joseph told his father what had passed, and went to his drawing. When his lesson was over, he asked his father if he might go and see Old Thomas.

"We will go together, after dinner;" said Mr. Basil.

In the afternoon they went. The poor mason lodged in a small house at the further end of the court. The pavement was covered with snow, except one small space, which had been swept very carefully, and on which a number of birds were picking up some food. Just then little Margaret came out of the house carrying a few crumbs in her hands, which she threw upon the place from which she had swept the snow. The birds flew to a wall just by, and when she was gone they returned to pick up the crumbs.

"I am glad to see you are so kind to these birds;" said Mr. Basil to the little girl.

M. They are such pretty creatures, and now they cannot find any thing to eat in the gardens and fields.

Mr. B. But God takes care of them, he sends you to give them some food. God does not forget even the meanest of his creatures, and it is a pleasure to be of use even to these little birds. But where is the poor mason you spoke about this morning?

The little girl recollected Joseph, and blushed as she opened the door where Thomas lived. Mr. Basil and his son entered, and, after a kind visit to the old man, they returned home.

As they entered the house, Mr. Basil heard a noise in the garden, and looking over the pales, he saw a lark with its foot caught in a trap of bricks.

The poor bird made a noise as if in pain, and tried in vain to get released.

Mr. Basil went to the place, and found that a brick had caught the poor lark by the leg, and crushed its foot.

"How cruel," said he; and, calling the servant, asked who had set the trap. He was very sorry to hear that Joseph had made it that morning.—He then took the lark, went into the house, and called his children.

"See," said he to Joseph, shewing him how the poor lark was hurt, "see the effects of your cruelty. This poor little creature was hungry, it came to our house to pick up something which was of no use to us, and you have been the means of breaking its leg, and causing it to suffer as you see."

The children were all very sorry, when they saw how the poor lark had its leg crushed, and how much pain it suffered.

"It shall suffer no more pain;" said Mr. Basil, killing the poor bird. "It is lawful for us to take the life of animals when we need them for food, but we are to be very careful not to put them to more pain than can be avoided. There was no occasion to catch this lark, and still less to set a trap for it, in which it might suffer much pain, for a very long time. Here," added he, giving the bird to Joseph, "look at it; think how much it suffered; this is your work to-day; compare it with what the little girl has done! My boy, you were right in being kind to her: but how inconsistent your cruel conduct towards the poor birds!"

Joseph could not reply. He felt how cruelly he had acted, when he saw how the poor bird's leg was crushed, and he determined never to set such a trap again. I hope all my readers will

form the same resolution. In the evening, his father spoke again respecting the bird. "Please, Sir, not to say any more about it," said Joseph; "I see how wrong I acted, and have been quite ashamed when I compared my conduct with that of the little girl."

Mr. B. Tell me how you could be so cruel.

J. I had no idea the trap would have made a poor bird suffer so much; I thought it would have been killed at once.

Mr. B. But why should you desire to take away the life of a poor bird? It is true, that God has given power to man over all animals, and that we may deprive them of life when we need them for food. But you did not want to satisfy your hunger, nor was it your means of getting a livelihood, as is the case with some persons: how could you be so thoughtless?

J. Papa, I forgot myself this morning.

Mr. B. How so?

J. I was cross when I got up, and then felt uncomfortable, and did not like to pray and read my Bible; and I began to quarrel with William, who wished to learn his lesson. I threw down my book on the floor, and spun my humming top. After breakfast, I went into the garden, where I saw some birds, and as I had nothing to do, I made the trap to catch them.

Mr. B. Well, Joseph, I am glad to find you are sensible you have done amiss. When the day begins badly it seldom passes without something wrong. What has happened to-day should be a lesson to you; remember to watch over your heart. Think of Christ; he was "gentle, meek, and mild:" let your conduct be in all things as becometh the gospel of Jesus Christ, who suffered

for our sins, to purify our hearts, and to fill us with love to him and all around us.

Joseph did not forget his father's words, and at night he prayed that he might be made more like the blessed Son of God while upon earth.

He began the next day in a very different manner, and after breakfast, asked his father to let him go and see poor Old Thomas.

Mr. B. Willingly; and here is a bundle of things your mother was going to send to the little girl; you may take them, and some tracts, and tell her to ask her parents to let her come to see your mother to morrow morning.

As Joseph passed along the court, he saw that the place was again cleared from the snow, and the birds were hopping about it. He thought of the poor lark.

Thomas was better, and able to stand. He told Joseph how kind Margaret had been. "You cannot think," said he, "what a good girl she is. She is so attentive, so gentle, and so patient, that it is very plain her chief delight is in doing good to others."

J. I suppose her parents have instructed her carefully?

T. They have nothing but their own labour to depend upon, but they have the fear of the Lord, and that is better than riches. They have brought up their children in his ways. If God had not sent them to be my neighbours, what would have become of me?

J. Margaret brought you some wood yesterday, did not she?

T. Yes, Sir; and her mother has told me how hard she worked to earn this money. Good girl! but she is always the same: she cannot see others in trouble without trying to do something to

comfort them. Even dumb creatures share her kindness. She collects every crumb for "the dear pretty birds," as she calls them.

J. It is very happy for a child to be born with such a kind disposition.

T. Oh, Sir, it is not by nature that she has this kind disposition. I knew her from a baby; and, till she was seven years old, she was just as thoughtless as other children: but since that time she has, by the grace of God, become very different.

J. Do you suppose she really loves Christ?

T. I am as sure of it as one person can be respecting another. I fully trust that Margaret is a child of God, and that her heart has been changed by his grace. Our Lord said, "by their fruits ye shall know them;" and an evil tree cannot bring forth those good fruits which God requires.

Joseph was struck with this account of Margaret. He could not help again comparing her conduct during the day before with his own, and he felt humbled by the comparison, but he determined to pray more earnestly for divine grace than he had ever yet done.

As Margaret was at the factory, Joseph left the bundle with Thomas, gave him some books suited for the afflicted, desired him to deliver the message, and returned home.

As he passed along the court, he looked at the birds once more, and took from them another *lesson of mercy*. "Ah," said he, "it is very true that we are naturally cruel and hard-hearted. Real love to the bodies and souls of our fellow-creatures, can only be found in a heart which 'has been changed by divine grace, and which has felt love for the Saviour;' and those who love him will not be cruel, even to birds and beasts."

Joseph did not forget *the lessons* he had received ; he was more earnest in his prayers at the throne of grace. His conduct soon shewed that his prayers had been heard and answered : even as our Lord promised,

“ ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE.”





MOUNTAIN JOHN AND THE BEAR.

It was the evening, and the moon was shining above the trees, when the family of Andrew the smith, heard a dreadful noise like the howling of a wolf, or some wild animal which is wounded.

The smith's children, who were sitting with their mother in the chimney corner, helping her to wind some thread, trembled, and cried out, "The wolf! the wolf! O mother, mother, shut the door and call father."

Their mother told them to be quiet; but as the howlings continued and seemed to approach nearer to the house, she called her husband, who was busy working at his forge, hammering a piece of iron, so that he had not heard the noise.

"What is the matter?" said he.

The Children. O father, dear father, save us from the wolf. O, he is coming, he is coming.

So saying they ran to hide themselves. One crept under the bed, another got behind the tubs in the wash-house. The smith snatched up a club-stick and his bill-hook, and went out.

In a minute they heard the sound of heavy blows; the animal cried out still more dreadfully,

and something very heavy fell against the door with great force, as if it would have beaten it in. Afterwards all was quiet, no sound was heard except the ticking of the clock, and the crackling of the wood fire.

Neither the mother nor her children stirred; they hardly ventured to breathe. Presently there was a knocking on the window shutter. The poor children were ready to die with fear, and hid their faces with their hands. Tap, tap, was heard still more plainly, but no one dared to answer.

“Are you all dead?” cried some one; “and must I break open the window?”

“Who are you?” said the mother, quite frightened.

“Who am I?” said the person, laughing; “that is an odd question to ask *me*: come, open the window directly.”

“Mother,” said one of the children, “I think it is father’s voice.”

“Andrew, is it *you*?” said she.

Andrew. Yes, it is *me*, sure enough; we cannot get in by the door, for the bear is lying there, and we are not sure that he is quite dead.

The mother then opened the window and the shutter. The smith and another man jumped in at the window. Their clothes were torn and covered with blood; their hands and faces also were bloody.

“Andrew, my dear Andrew,” exclaimed the wife, “are you hurt? say, are you hurt?”

Andrew. Neither I nor my companion are hurt; but let us thank God, for the bear was very furious. Come, quick, let us have something warm and comfortable; the battle was sharp, and we have got some severe bruises. Children, where are you?—you need not be afraid; the bear is too

large to get through the key-hole, and I don't think he is very likely to stir again.

"I am of your opinion," said the stranger, closing the shutter of the window. "I think God has taken away his breath; let us be thankful: we may say, with David, 'He has delivered us from the bear. His deliverance is for his children.'"

The two children then made their appearance from under the bed, and from behind the washing tub: one was covered with dust and feathers, the other was all over cobwebs. They came up to their father, but cried out when they saw that his arm was bloody.

The Father. Why, you little cowards; are you frightened at the sight of blood? It is not mine, it came from the bear, and a little water will wash it away. Wife, give us a pail of water.

She washed their clothes, and then gave them a good basin of soup, which was ready for their supper, and when they had refreshed themselves, they agreed to go and see whether the bear could bite or not. Andrew took up his bill-hook, and the stranger took up a chopper, and they were going to open the door.

"O father!" cried the children, "pray don't open the door, pray don't; the bear will come in."

Andrew. Nonsense. There; run up stairs.

Children. But, father, the bear will come after us.

Andrew. Then get into the empty flour binn.

He opened the door, and lifted up his bill-hook to strike the bear, but it fell lifeless upon the kitchen floor.

It was a very large animal and quite dead, one of its paws was nearly cut off, and its skull was split on the forehead. The threshold was covered with its blood.

When Andrew and the stranger were satisfied that the bear was quite dead, they drew it into the house and shut the door. When that was fast, the children, who had raised the lid of the binn to peep at what was going forward, ventured to come out, and look at the bear, but were still afraid to touch it.

“ Well,” said the wife, “ sit down and tell us all about this terrible business.”

The children crept close to their mother’s apron, as she sat by the fire; while the stranger related what had happened, as follows :

“ I am called Mountain John. I deal in *amadou*,* and go about to collect mushrooms and fungus to make it. Last year I found a great many in the wood yonder, and I came there again this morning to look for some. About noon I sat down to rest on the hill, under the great oak, from whence you can see so far in every direction. While I ate a crust of bread, I admired the beautiful works of God; the lake, the valley, and the mountains. I thought of the power of that great God who made all things, and rejoiced as I sang His praises.— ‘ Well,’ thought I to myself, ‘ I am poor, and possess nothing in this world but my pack and what it contains. When I die nobody will trouble themselves about me, and I shall be put under ground without being missed; but I know where my soul will go: I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day, the great day of his appearing. He has never left me destitute as to the things of this world, much less will he leave me destitute as to heavenly things. My Saviour has prepared a

* A sort of tinder used abroad.

place for me in his Father's house. Why then, art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Is not he God over all, from everlasting to everlasting? and is he not my heavenly Father, seeing that he gave his only and well beloved Son as a ransom for my soul.'

"While my thoughts were engaged in this manner, I saw in the valley beneath me, a large animal running very swiftly through the bushes. At first I thought it was an ass that had strayed, but looking stedfastly at it, I saw it was a great bear followed by some hunters. The bear ran into the wood by the side of the lake, followed by the huntsmen and their dogs; presently I heard two guns fired, and I concluded that the bear was killed.

" 'This,' thought I, 'reminds me of the end of the wicked man. He, like that wild beast, for a time, goes about seeking what he may devour; he hides himself from the eyes of the world, as that beast did in the wood, and thinks he is quite safe. But God sees the sinner, and knows the proper time for punishing him; and, if he does not forsake his evil ways and turn to the Lord, he will be stricken, and perish without remedy. But those who love the Lord, and fear Him, are kept from harm; and the wicked, although more fierce and cruel than the lion, the tiger, or the bear, are not



suffered to touch them ; because, in the way in which they go, —————,

Andrew. Stop a moment, John ; I will shew you the text in the Bible : here it is—in Isaiah, the 35th chapter. The prophet is speaking of the church of Christ, and he says, “ An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, *The Way of Holiness* ; the unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those (that is, the ransomed of the Lord :) the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there ; but the redeemed shall walk there.”

John. Yes, that is the passage which I remembered when I saw the bear. After resting myself, I began again to search for mushrooms and fungus, and I have reason to be thankful that I was pretty successful : my pack lies yonder in the wood, full of the finest mushrooms I ever saw. To be sure, I did not get them without trouble ; I climbed several trees, and had to creep up and down some very steep places. At last I was benighted, and the moon had risen, when I found myself in the narrow path which leads through the midst of the wood, by the spring yonder. I was quite tired, so I sat down to rest ; just as I was rising, I heard something rustling among the bushes ; I did not stir, and presently I saw the great bear which I had seen in the morning, coming towards the spring.

The Mother. How frightened you must have been ; did not you think it was all over with you ?

John. Certainly, it is not very pleasant to find oneself, at night, alone in a wood with such a companion. At first I trembled, but God was pleased to strengthen my mind, and take away all

my fear. I was no more afraid of the bear than as if he had been a ram or a goat.

Andrew. But what did you do?

John. I left my pack and slipped behind a tree; and, while the bear was drinking, I got away softly from one tree to another; I had reached the skirt of the wood, close to your house, and was about to run for shelter; when, all at once, I found the bear was close behind me. It was no use then trying to run from him, so I turned round, and, praying to God to preserve my life, I waited for him. He was close upon me, and in a moment he rose upon his hind legs to seize me, uttering a frightful howl. As I said, I had prayed for strength, and snatching up a large stone which lay close by me, I struck him on the nose with all my force, and knocked him backwards. I jumped upon his neck, and continued striking him on the nose, while he tried to ward off the blows with his paws. I was nearly spent, when God sent you just in time to save my life, and enabled you after a short struggle to wound him mortally with your bill-hook.

Andrew. It reminds me of the history of David. How kind of the Lord to take away your fear, and make you determine to attack the bear first, and then to guide your hand to strike him on the nose, which is a very tender part in that animal. This, indeed, was the work of God's providence; and remember this, children, it is a proof that the Lord always protects those who trust in him.

Mother. How glad I am, Andrew, that you did not go to the mill this evening, as you intended. How providential that you staid at home, else what would have become of John!

John. Ah, my good woman, I am accustomed to experience, that God knows all things, and directs all things, and that there is nothing forgotten, or too trifling for him to notice, when it concerns his people. I was taught this when I was not older than your boy, and by his grace I now know that he has redeemed me by his own precious blood, and made me one of his children. Therefore I can trust him with my body and my soul, which are his.

Andrew. My dears, remember what this good man has told us. You see that he trusted in God, because he believed in him as the Saviour, and you see how the Lord has just now preserved him from a terrible death.

The eldest child then rose, went to John, and took hold of his hand. John lifted him upon his knees, and said, "Well, my boy, will not you trust in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Tell me, should you not like to resemble David when he was a little boy?"

The child hung down his head, and said "Yes," in a low tone of voice. He then looked at his mother, who patted him on the head, saying, "O yes, I do hope that my dear Henry has already learned something of the goodness of the Lord, and that he tries to do His will."

J. But would he be afraid if he saw a great bear coming?

Henry replied, "How could I help being afraid of him? he is so big and so fierce. Why, he would have knocked me to pieces with one blow of that great paw yonder."

J. Yes, we are all exposed to dangers of various kinds and often if we escape from one we may fall into another, "as if a man did flee from



a lion, and a bear met him;" but, my boy, trust in the Lord, and neither a bear nor that "roaring lion," which goes about seeking whom he may devour, even the devil, as we read in the epistle of St. Peter, will be able to hurt you. He who watches over your soul is able to keep you from evil and danger. He preserved me when I was about your age, and has done so again to-day.

H. What! did you fight a bear when you were no bigger than I am?

J. No, my boy; but I was wonderfully preserved when I fell from the top of a very lofty precipice.

"How was it?" said both the children at once. "Do tell us all about it."

J. In the country where I was born, which is many miles from this place, there is a very high mountain. One side of it is quite a precipice, and people go thither to hunt the Chamois and the Marmots, which abound in that place. One day I went there with some of my companions, and we saw a Marmot creep into a cleft in the side of the rock.

I was one of the most courageous of the band

and was foolhardy enough to say, "I'll go and pull him out of his hole." "No, no, John," they all cried out, "it is not safe; his hole is on the edge of the precipice; if your foot slips nothing can save you." They tried all they could to dissuade me, but in vain—I was rash enough to determine to have my own way.

I let myself down over the edge of the rock. The Marmot was just within his hole, behind a plant of wild geranium. I saw him plain enough, and determined to try to reach him, though I was hanging over a precipice a thousand feet deep.

I ought to have given up this foolish design, and to have remembered that there is no real courage in exposing oneself to a useless danger. But I was young and foolish. I then knew nothing of the Lord. I thought my life was in my own power, and that I might do whatever I chose. Well, I rested one foot upon a stone, I bent forward, and stretched out my arm to lay hold of the Marmot. All at once I was gone! I recollected nothing more till I found myself in the cottage of a charcoal burner, lying upon his bed. I was in pain all over, and my mother was watching me.



H. How did this happen? Did the charcoal burner live under the rock, and catch you as you fell?

J. No, my boy; he lived a good way off, in the forest. But listen to an account of what the Lord did for me, poor, miserable, and foolish creature that I was. My head became giddy—I fell. My companions saw me go headlong from the top of the precipice, and ran homewards, crying out that I was killed. As soon as they arrived in our village, my mother and all the people ran out. They concluded I was dashed to pieces, and she went immediately, with two of the neighbours, to seek for my remains. When she came near the fatal spot, weeping bitterly, and every moment expecting to find the shattered body of her dear child, she saw a tall, stout man, the charcoal burner, coming from behind a great mass of rock with me in his arms. My mother has often told me about it. My dear mother; she is now in heaven.—[Tears came into his eyes as he spoke, and he added,] She was so kind to me, she taught me to love and fear God. [After a few minutes' silence he went on.] My dear mother has often told me that when she saw me in the man's arms, a thought darted into her mind, as if a voice said, “I have preserved him, it is my doing!” She ran forward, exclaiming, “O, my good man, where did you find him?” “Don't stop me,” said the man; “come along, he still breathes.” A neighbour helped him; they hastened to his cottage, and, putting me upon his bed, they did all they could to bring me to myself.

My mother watched over my body. I was then beginning to recover a little. O how glad they were! The charcoal burner joined his hands, and said, “O Lord, thou hast preserved his life, may

it be for thy glory!" "Amen," said my mother. As for me, I seemed to be in a dream. They undressed me, and put me to bed, and it was several days before I could be moved. I could not even bear that any one should speak to me. I was then carried home, and I suffered much pain for nearly two months. But God is just, and I deserved all that I had undergone.

M. You have not told us how the charcoal burner found you.

J. This good man, who was a second father to me, and who, I trust, is now in heaven, was in the forest, at the foot of the mountain, looking for wood fit for charcoal, when he heard a noise in the air, like the flying of a large bird, and, looking up, he saw something caught in a branch of a large pine tree, about a hundred yards distant. Upon viewing it more attentively he saw it was a boy hanging by the skirt of his jacket, which had caught on the branch.

It was almost impossible to get to the place where this tree grew, among the rocks, and still harder to reach the end of the branch; but this good man thought the same arm of the Lord which supported Jonathan, when he climbed up the sharp (or steep) rock upon his hands and feet, (1 Sam. xiv. 13.) would support him. He climbed up the rock with much difficulty, and at length reached the pine tree, and laying at full length along the branch he could just reach the skirt of my jacket; and then creeping backwards he put one arm round the trunk of the tree, and held me in the other, and thus contrived to slip down.

He has told me that at first he thought I was dead, and was going to leave me among the branches till he went for ropes and a ladder; but, while he was considering if he should do so, he

thought he heard me sigh, and putting his face close to mine he found that I still breathed. He then took courage, having prayed to God to enable him to descend in safety with his burden. The Lord heard his prayer,—and my days were thus lengthened.

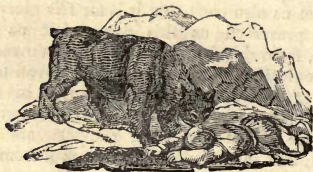
You now know why I am called *Mountain John*. I like the name, for it always reminds me that God held me aloft in the midst of the abyss into which I had fallen, and that the prayer of my preserver, and of my dear mother, was, “May the Lord have preserved him for His glory!”

A. Let us also trust that it is for His glory that he has preserved us this day. Let us take courage, from this instance of his care over us; and I would believe that God has sent you to our cottage that we may love each other for his sake, and that these children may learn and perceive that those whom the Lord protects are well guarded, and that all deliverance comes from Him alone.



They then knelt down together in prayer—Mountain John passed the night with Andrew, and in the morning they carried the bear to the next city, where they sold it for a good price. At

this John was much pleased ; and Andrew said, “ If the bear was killed by my bill-hook, it was for your preservation that God directed me to strike, and the remembrance of your visit will, I trust, be better to us than the treasures of this world.”





HYMNS FOR CHILDREN.

WILLIAM and his sister Jane were returning home. They were singing as they walked along. At a turning of the road they saw a gentleman sitting upon the bank; he was writing in his pocket book.

“My dears,” said the gentleman, “you are singing very merrily.”

The children stopped and were silent.

G. Do not let me stop your singing: go on, I shall like to hear you.

“Oh, Sir,” said William, “the song is not worth your hearing.”

G. Why not, it pleases you, so perhaps it may please me. What was it about?

J. It was a song which one of our cousins taught us yesterday.

G. How does it begin?

William then sang the first verse of a song. It was foolish though not wicked.

G. I am sorry it is not about something better. God has given you a good voice, and a good memory. Cannot you employ them better?

W. Why, Sir, there is no harm in the song. Surely we may sing sometimes.

G. Yes, my boy, singing is as lawful to man as to the lark yonder: but ought not the songs we sing to be different from those of a bird?

J. O, Sir, the birds sing because they are pleased. I do not know that they mean any thing. They sing to amuse themselves.

G. Well, but we have sense and reason which birds have not. Should not our songs be different from theirs?

W. Yes, Sir, our songs are about something.

G. Do you suppose the sweet song which you hear from the lark has no meaning?

W. I do not know, Sir; it is not like our songs.

G. Certainly not; but do not the beautiful notes of the bird lead you to think of him who made the bird, and who gave it that sweet voice?

W. Yes, Sir; we know that it was God who made the birds, and beasts, and all things, and enabled them to sing.

G. And is it not God who gave you the ability to sing? Your powers, as well as those of the birds, came from God, who created all things. You know this, but the lark does not: this makes a great difference between you and the bird.

W. But we do not sing as he does: what we sing has a meaning.

G. Where is the great difference? The bird sings for its pleasure; I think you only sing to amuse yourselves.

J. But we need not sing for sorrow.

G. There are sorrowful songs; but we generally

sing to express our joy. Still there should be a difference between our joy and that of birds. If we know God, and love him with our hearts, we shall remember him in our joy, for we are his work and belong to him. We should do all things for his glory; the Bible tells us so. The Apostle says: "You are bought with a price, (meaning the sufferings which Christ endured for his people,) therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. vi. 20. see also Eph. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17.)

W. But, Sir, how can a song be to the glory of God? Do you mean psalms? they are so long and so dull.

G. Let us suppose that the lark knew who made and who loved it. Would it sing differently from its usual manner?

W. Is not that its proper way of singing, Sir?

G. Yes; but you spoke of its song as being merely to please itself. Now, if the lark knew its Maker, would not it address its songs to him; perhaps it may do so more than we are aware.

J. Ah, Sir, I think I know what you mean. You mean that when we sing, we should remember God sees us, and never sing any thing which may be displeasing to him.

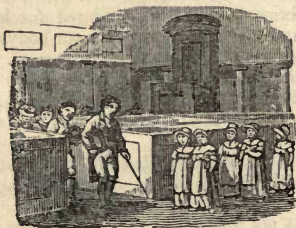
G. Yes, that is what I mean; for as we ought not to *say* any thing that is wrong, it is very plain we ought not to *sing* any thing improper. But it is not enough merely to abstain from what is wrong; we ought also to do what is right.

W. Then we ought to sing about God?

G. Are you surprised at that, my boy? Should not those beings whom God has made, live to his glory? Our Lord himself said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (Matt. xxii.

37. see also Deut. xiii. 3.) Then is it not right that we should sing to the praise and glory of his grace?

J. But, Sir, we are not always at church? and, when we are merry and gay, it would be very strange to sing as we do at church.



G. My dear children, when we are at church, it is to worship God, and hear his word, and for that reason the psalms are solemn and grave. But there are other songs, which we may sing to the praise of God.*

W. What are they, Sir? I never heard any such.

G. The Bible tells us: "Is any merry? let him sing psalms;" (James v. 13.) but it also says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns,

* Our English readers will be surprised to find that these children did not know of any hymns or divine songs suitable for children. They must remember that this little narrative is about children in Switzerland, and it should remind them how thankful they should be for the many privileges they enjoy in England, which children in other countries have not. How sad it is when children are careless and indifferent as to these advantages!

and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." (Eph. v. 19.) There are hymns as well as psalms which you may sing.

J. Can you tell us one of them, Sir? Are they pretty?

G. I will read you one which I have just written.

J. Oh, Sir, pray do; what is it about?

G. Do you see the shepherd down in the meadow yonder, under the oaks?



J. He lives at that farm-house under the hill.

G. When I saw him taking care of his sheep and lambs, I thought of what the Scriptures tell us about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom the prophet Isaiah (ch. xl. 11.) thus describes: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."

J. And did you write a song about it?

G. Something like it, my girl. I have said how happy the lambs belonging to this good shepherd should be under his care; and I have written it as if He were a shepherd speaking to his sheep.

W. Why, Sir, you said our song was silly because it was about a dog.

G. If your song had spoken of the faithfulness of the dog to his master, as reminding us of our duty to God, I should have been better pleased with it. You will find that what the shepherd in my song is represented as saying, is to remind you of the loving-kindness of Christ the good shepherd, and how attentive we should be to his word, if we belong to his flock.

J. I should like to hear the song. Do read it to us if you please, Sir.

G. Listen then to

THE SHEPHERD'S SONG.

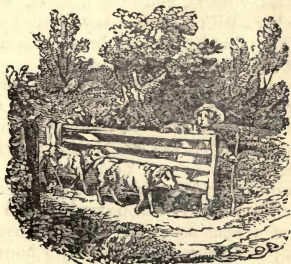
COME, little lambs, and feed
Safe in the fertile mead,
Where gentle waters pass,
Amidst the flow'rs and grass :
Your Shepherd's hand and crook are near :
Here rest in peace, exempt from fear.

Go not, my lambs, astray
In any devious way ;
The savage wolves will leap
Upon the wand'ring sheep :
Here, in this pleasant pasture rest,
With plenty, peace, and safety blest.

Can that poor lamb rejoice,
 Who will not hear my voice ?
 But though of danger told,
 Resolves to leave the fold ?—
 The wolf has seized him—hear his cries,
 The wand'rer groans—the wand'rer dies.

Oh, lovely lambs, beware
 How you despise my care,
 And quit the happy meads
 To which your Shepherd leads ;
 I will protect you night and day,
 Then never from your Shepherd stray.

My little lambs, like you,
 I have a Shepherd too,
 Who keeps me in his fold—
 Whose love can ne'er be told—
 Who guides me by his crook and rod—
 My Shepherd is—my Saviour God.



W. I think, Sir, I know what you mean. It is prettier than our song ; and what it tells us is of

great consequence : it is very different from what I expected.

J. Sir, it is prettier than any song I ever heard ; I like the last verse very much indeed.

G. Do you really like that verse the best ?

J. Yes, Sir ; it is about our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God : he is the best of shepherds.

G. Certainly he is : but if you really think so, you will like to sing about him, instead of the common foolish songs. Those who love Christ will delight to sing to his praise and glory.

W. Jane, I have made up my mind ; we will not learn any more of cousin Sally's foolish songs ; at least I will not.

J. Nor I.

G. But you are able to sing, and you like to sing : what will you do ?

J. Sir, if you will let us have that song about the shepherd, we will learn it.

G. Yes, my dears, you shall have it, and here is a little book with a great many pretty hymns or divine songs ; but before you begin to learn any, you must ask your parents' leave.

J. Sir, I am quite sure our mother will like them, for she told us yesterday, that she did not think the songs our cousin was teaching us were pretty ones, and that she would rather we learned to sing psalms.

G. I am glad to hear this, and if you come to my house some day, I shall be well pleased to find that you can sing some of the pretty hymns in that book ; and there is a lady at my house who will teach you the tunes if you are at a loss.

W. Thank you, Sir ; are all the songs in this book as pretty as that one about the shepherd ?

G. Some of them are more serious, my boy ; and

it is right to learn hymns of various sorts, if they all tell us of the Saviour.

J. Are they all hymns ?

G. Yes, my girl, they are all written to praise God ; for all things should glorify Him.

W. Sir, we thank you very much indeed, and we will ask leave to come and see you next week, if you will let us, and we shall have learned some of these hymns by that time.

Perhaps this dialogue may interest some of our readers, and they, like William and Jane, may be inclined to learn hymns or divine songs, which, by the blessing of God, may make them wise unto salvation. There are many books suitable for them : we will particularly remind them of "*Dr. Watts's Divine Songs*," and the "*Cottage Hymns*," but particularly the "*Family Hymn Book*;" a very beautiful little book published by the "*Religious Tract Society*." They will find hymns which tell them of the love of Christ to poor sinners, and such as ought to be fixed in the memory, and to be heard from the lips of all the children of God.





ONE BLOW OF THE CHISEL DOES
NOT MAKE A STATUE.*

STEPHEN BROWN was ten years old, and Lewis, his brother, but eight. Stephen was of a dull capacity, and found it very hard to learn his lessons; but what he did learn he generally understood. Lewis was very quick, and could learn his lessons in half the time that Stephen took, but he was always full of play and fun, and sometimes got into a good deal of mischief. They went to a day school together, and were in the same class. One afternoon they had a half holiday, and both of them were set a Latin lesson to learn at home: I am sorry to say, they had some cross words almost as soon as they were out of school. After dinner they went into the garden with their books, and, taking a seat in the arbour, they began their

* This may be termed an imitation rather than a translation of the original.

studies. When they had been thus engaged some time, their father passed behind the arbour, and he heard Lewis cry out, "Ah, master Stephen, I can say my lesson, and you are only half through your's; what a lazy fellow you are. I will run and fly my kite, and leave you to mope by yourself." I fear that Stephen was about to answer Lewis's foolish boasting speech in an angry spirit, but just then his father stepped up, and taking the hands of his two boys, he said, "Lewis, you are a vain and foolish little boy to talk in such a way to your brother; and Stephen, your angry face shews that you are unwise enough to be in a passion with your brother. God has given you, my children, different capacities, and every talent we possess comes from him. Stephen, though you are rather slow in learning, yet, by diligence and perseverance, you will be sure to get on, and therefore do not be discouraged. Lewis, you can learn quickly; but if you are thus tempted to become an idle playful boy, you will not advance in your learning, and you will prove an unprofitable servant to that God who has given you the talent of a good memory." Mr. Brown said a good deal more, and then taking out his pocket Bible, he told Lewis to learn the 139th Psalm while his brother was finishing his lesson.

A few days after, Mr. Brown took Lewis with him to a neighbouring town, where they called upon a Sculptor, a very clever man. When Lewis and his father entered the workshop, he was very busily employed upon a block of marble.

F. Do not disturb yourself, Sir. I called to ask you to let us see you at work, will you allow us to look on for a short time?

The Sculptor. Certainly, Sir; only just stand

at a little distance for a few minutes, while I knock off this corner of the stone.

Lewis and his father went to the other end of the shop, and the sculptor took a great chisel and a heavy mallet, with which he knocked off several large pieces from one side of the block.

The S. You see, Sir, I do not stand upon trifles, but get on as fast as I can.

L. Do you always get on as fast, Sir?

The S. No; you must not think statues are altogether made in this manner.

L. Are you going to make a statue out of that great clumsy piece of stone?

The S. Yes.

L. How can you contrive to make it, Sir?

The S. You see me just beginning, if you will call sometimes, you will see how I get on, and if God is pleased to allow me to complete my work, you may see it finished.

Lewis thanked the kind artist, and when they had seen him knock off another corner of the stone, they wished him good morning, and said they would call again.

L. Father, it is very strange that the sculptor should be able to make a statue out of that clumsy shapeless mass of stone.

F. Do you think he did wrong to knock off those large pieces?

L. I dare say he knows what is proper to be done, and that it is right to begin in this manner.

F. What should you think of a person, ignorant of sculpture, who should go to him and say, "I am afraid you know nothing about what you have undertaken to do, because what you are doing does not shew the shape you say it is to represent."

L. He would shew his ignorance and folly; for my part, I hope I should not speak so foolishly.

F. Well, then, if you ought not to speak so hastily in this respect, remember not to speak so rashly as you did to your brother the other day.

They then pursued their walk and returned home.

Lewis told Stephen about their visit to the sculptor; Stephen was sorry he had not gone, and he asked his father to take him the next time.

Several days past, and at length they went.—The sculptor was seated on a low stool, with a small chisel and a light mallet; he struck very gently, and only took off a sort of dust, which could be blown away with the breath.

The stone had been cut, and brought into some degree of shape, and the boys could see that it was intended for a lion. The artist was then at work upon one of its paws, which was nearly finished: the rest of the body was as yet only roughly cut out.

“Oh, how very different the stone looks,” said Lewis, as soon as he had satisfied himself it was the same stone as he had seen before; “what a difference! O father, it is to be a lion, see what a long tail and what a shaggy mane it will have!”

St. And look at that foot, how should you like him to give you a claw with it?

The Sculptor. Well, gentlemen, you see the stone is quite altered since your first visit.

L. Yes, Sir, you have given it this shape, and I think you must have had a great deal of trouble with it.

The S. It is God who gave me the skill to do what I have done, and if I have succeeded it has been by the help of him who taught man to cultivate the ground. As you may read Is. xxviii. 29. “This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts,

who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

St. But I suppose, Sir, it took you some time to learn how to make a statue: it did not come into your head all at once?

The S. O no; it took me a long time. But God gave me patience to learn, as well as ability to understand, what I was taught; and he gives me skill and power to direct the chisel so as to produce the work I intend.

The sculptor, who was a good natured man, talked with them for some time longer, and shewed them how he worked, and began one of the eyes of the lion.

The children were much gratified, and would have stayed all day, if their father had not reminded them that it was time to go home. They then took leave of the sculptor, and as they walked homewards, they noticed particularly that the sculptor had expressed his thankfulness to God, for the abilities he possessed.

F. My children, when a man prospers and obtains useful knowledge, he should ascribe his understanding and his industry to the Lord. But Lewis, tell me what do you now think of the manner in which you saw the sculptor working some days ago.

L. I see that it was necessary to bring the stone into its present shape.

F. And do you not think that, when finished, it will be still more beautiful than it now is?—Which sort of work appeared the slowest; when the sculptor knocked off great pieces of stone, or when he finished so carefully?

L. O, the last is much the slowest.

St. Certainly, for sometimes he touched the

marble so very gently that the chisel hardly made an impression.

F. But which produced the best effect? You, my boys, should recollect the careful and exact manner in which the sculptor worked, when you are engaged in learning your lessons, and often think of his patience and perseverance.

When the statue was finished their father again took his two sons to see it. It was a beautiful work and highly finished. Several persons were standing near and praising it very much. Stephen and Lewis recollected that it was the same work they had seen, and expressed their astonishment to find it so beautiful.

Their father stopped as long as they wished, and was pleased with the attention they paid. When they returned home, he called Lewis into his study, and said to him, "You saw how the sculptor began and continued his work, and you have to-day seen the beautiful statue that he has at length formed. He is a very clever man; but this is not all, he is, besides, a very diligent and persevering man: he pursued his work, stroke by stroke, day after day, and month after month, till he had completed it. You learn very quickly; but take care, my dear boy, or this will prove a snare to you by making you idle and careless. You cannot be truly wise without being diligent, and the more talent you possess, the more you should improve it. One blow of the chisel does not make a statue, neither does a little cleverness and quickness make a truly wise man. Think of these two maxims, and then you will not be vain and idle: *first*, That God has given you every talent you possess, and he requires you to improve it to the utmost, and will call you to give an account of the way in which you have used it; and, *secondly*,

That the most diligent of the people of God, when they look back on their lives, must consider themselves as ‘unprofitable servants.’ Never, then, my dear Lewis, let me hear you boast over others; but let me intreat you to remember the favourite proverb of the meek and lowly Jesus: ‘Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.’ ”



